DANGERS

OF THE

APOSTOLIC AGE.

BY THE

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To

MY DEAR WIFE,

TO WHOSE LOVING AND UNTIRING HELP
I OWE MUCH OF THE LEISURE WHICH I HAVE
EMPLOYED IN THEIR COMPOSITION,
I DEDICATE THESE LECTURES.

PREFACE.

The dangers of the Christian Church in the Apostolic age, as they are revealed to us in the New Testament, seem to me to have been mainly the three following.

(1) The danger that the Church might be narrowed, in its doctrine and practice, by the determination of the Judaizing party within it to insist that all should enter it by the way of circumcision, and that all should hold their right of membership only on condition of observing the whole Law of Moses. This party looked upon the Gospel as a reformed and spiritualized edition of the Law, and upon the Christian Church as a somewhat liberalized form of the ancient Jewish communion. Had these pretensions been admitted, every Gentile, in order to become a Christian, must first practically have become a Jew, and have taken upon himself all the burdensome obligations of the Mosaic law. To such requirements the Gentile world would never have submitted, and the Church would have been strangled in its cradle.

Worst of all, the spiritual freedom of the Gospel would have been first obscured and then destroyed, and the world would have lost its greatest spiritual treasure, before even it knew what it was losing.

To avert calamities so terrible, St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Galatians, attacking the nascent error where it had gained greatest acceptance and where it threatened the most fatal consequences.

(2) The second danger by which the Apostolic Church was threatened had a mainly Gentile source. It arose, not from a jealous and exclusive Judaism, but from what thought itself a liberal and enlightened philosophy. The difficulty was keenly felt in the Apostolic age, as it is felt by many still, of reconciling the omnipotence of God with the existence of moral and physical evil. Gnostic thinkers were already endeavouring to minimize this difficulty by interposing between the Divine Source of life and the manifestations therein of pain and sin, a series of secondary beings, to the later and less spiritual of whom, and not to God, the causing of evil might be attributed.

St. Paul attacked this error in the Epistle to the Colossians, claiming therein for God His unimpaired right of universal sovereignty, and pointing for the solution of the terrible problem of evil to a redemption eternally designed, and as universal as the evil which it was wrought to remedy.

(3) The third danger was one which was rather experienced by the Jewish Christians than caused by them. As the slow years wore on without any visible return of the Son of God in power and great glory, Jewish Christians whose faith had been largely coloured, if not mainly supported, by the expectation of such a return, began to be weary and faint in their minds. If their hope had been deceived in this respect, they asked themselves, could they trust it in any other? Towards the close of the seventh decade of the Christian era, while their minds were in this state of doubt and perplexity, they were stirred to the depth of their souls by the approach of the great Jewish rebellion. Should they take no part in it? Should they leave their brethren unhelped to meet the tremendous shock of the Roman? This question, agitating at any time, was doubly formidable now, when their belief in Christ and in His promises had been rudely shaken. They were tempted accordingly to abandon the faith and the very name of Christian, and as Jews pure and simple, to stand or fall, live or die, with their brethren after the flesh. The danger was of apostasy, and the Epistle to the Hebrews was written to meet it.

I have written the three courses of lectures which follow, in the hope of giving to those who have neither access to many books nor much time for study, as vivid

a picture as I could draw of the great spiritual struggles which, in the Apostolic age, arose out of the approach of these dangers. The subject is itself of deep interest to every Christian man, and, if I am not mistaken, its consideration will be productive of two great advantages of a more or less permanent character : it will enable us to gain a clearer apprehension of the meaning of those inspired records which are our authority in matters of doctrine ; and it will throw great and welcome light on many of those deeper subjects of speculation which are of permanent interest to the human mind. May God be graciously pleased to accept this humble effort to commend the truth of His Holy Word to the men of this generation, and to make it, if it be fit for so gracious an office, a means of their spiritual edification.

Bishopscourt, Manchester,
7th November, 1890.

Of the many books which I have had occasion to consult in the preparation of these lectures, I set down here those which I think will be most valuable to the student.

Introduction to the New Testament: Dr. Salmon.
The Life and Epistles of St. Paul: Conybeare and Howson; Lewin; Archdeacon Farrar.
Paul, his Life and Works: F. C. Baur.
Church History: F. C. Baur.
Paulinism: O. Pfleiderer.
Hibbert Lectures: O. Pfleiderer; Professor Reville; Le Page Renouf; Professor Sayce.
History of Christian Theology in the Apostolic Age: Reuss.
St. Paul's Epistles to the Thessalonians, Galatians, and Romans: Jowett.
History of Philosophy: Ueberweg.
The World as Will and Idea: Schopenhauer.
The Philosophy of the Unconscious: Von Hartmann.
Prolegomena to Ethics: J. H. Green.
Data of Ethics: Spencer.
Types of Ethical Theory: Martineau.
Philosophy of Religion: Pfleiderer.
Three Essays on Religion: J. S. Mill.
Bampton Lectures: Bishop Temple.
Prolegomena to the History of Religions: Professor Reville.
The Religion of the Semites: Professor W. Robertson Smith.
St. Paul's Epistle to the Galatians: Bishop Lightfoot; Prof. Beet.
St. Paul's Epistle to the Colossians: Bishop Lightfoot; Rev. Ll. Davies.
The Epistle to the Hebrews: Bishop Westcott; Delitzsch.
The Jewish Temple and the Christian Church: Rev. Dr. Dale.
Introduction to Epistle to Hebrews: Alford; Professor R. Smith in *Enc. Brit.*

References to places and persons in Dr. Smith's Bible and Classical Dictionaries, and in the 9th edition of the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, especially, in *Enc. Brit.*, Mr. Ramsay's article on "Phrygia."

CONTENTS.

THE GALATIAN LAPSE.

I.

I HOPE to explain to you in these lectures the connection of the life of the glorified Saviour with the moral and religious regeneration of mankind. Perhaps you would like me to plunge at once into the midst of our subject. I think, however, that it will be good, both for you and me, that I should take a different course.

Each of the great salient truths of the Christian faith has been forced into form and clearness by the pressure of special circumstances. And if we would firmly grasp the full meaning and germinant applications of those truths, if we would see them with the eyes of those who first caught sight of them, cast them into verbal form, and made them prevail, we must be content to approach them by the slow and patient historical method. If, therefore, you think that I am leading you to the heart of our subject by a very round-about path, I wish you to remember that I have deliberately chosen this method as the only one likely to be fruitful.

St. Paul was incomparably the greatest thinker of the Primitive Church; in my judgment, one of the greatest thinkers of all time. In saying this I do not mean for a moment to suggest any comparison between the Apostle and his Divine Master. Any such comparison would have seemed to him nothing short of blasphemy. I think, however, you will see, as we proceed, that my estimate of the Apostle's spiritual insight and power is by no means exaggerated. That which led him to put forth and display that power was a violent controversy which arose in the

Primitive Church, and which came to a climax in Galatia Hence my selection of the Galatian lapse as the subject of our meditation in the present course of lectures.

Now, in order that we may understand the cause of that lapse, and the occasion of the Apostle's rebuke of it, it is necessary that we should get a very clear idea of two things, first, the character of those who fell; and, second, the nature of the influence which caused their fall. I shall consider the first of these topics in the present lecture.

Our question, then, is to-day, What was the character of the Galatians? In order to give a clear answer to that question, we must know something both of the people and the land which they inhabited. Galatia, we are told, was a country of Asia Minor; but to say no more than that is to say what is not only insufficient, but misleading. For, equally to the Christian and the classical scholar, the name Asia Minor calls up the thought of that beautiful but narrow band of it which lies on the shores of the Ægean, and looks forth directly upon Greece. To the north of it is the Troad, the scene of that struggle which has been immortalized in the Iliad. In the midst of it lies the old "Asian meadow" of Homer, the valley and plain of the Cayster. Fertile and beautiful exceedingly, this narrow territory glows amidst the darkness of Western barbarism with a light which time will never quench. Its glory is as the glory of Athens, its mother-land; and so long as the pursuit of truth and the worship of beauty arouse and impel the soul of man, the philosophy of Thales and Heracleitus, the art of Apelles and Parrhasius, will give to Ionia a deathless name.

Nor is the interest of the Christian in that classic region one whit inferior to that of the scholar. For at Ephesus, at Smyrna, and the rest of the seven churches it was St. Paul who lit the candlestick of Divine truth, and St. John who

fed its flame with unction from the Holy One. And though now the lamps of Asia are extinguished, and all is dark, yet memory clings fondly to the holy ground, peopling its marshes and desolations with the august and sacred forms which have made it famous among the abodes of early culture and religion.

But all the more because we are accustomed to identify Asia Minor with this brilliant fringe of one of its sea coasts, is it misleading to say only that Galatia was in Asia Minor. That immense country has a very peculiar formation. Its central parts consist of a vast tableland, between two thousand feet and four thousand feet above the level of the sea, from which it is everywhere separated by lofty mountains. Its vast central plains are desolate and treeless, not unlike many of those with which we are familiar in Australia, and like them affording pasturage for vast flocks of sheep. They are occupied now mainly by nomad people, though in past times the more fertile parts of them were made to yield considerable crops of grain. The greater part of this central tract is very badly watered; and such streams as it has find no outlet to the sea, but form great lakes, the largest of them of extreme saltness, though many are fresh, with bright green banks, and covered by water-birds.

It may easily be conceived that the climate of this lofty, dry, treeless plain is peculiar, presenting great extremes of temperature, intense heat in summer, and an equally intense cold in winter. At all seasons, therefore, travelling in it must be extremely trying. Throughout the greater part of the year the traveller who has come from the hot seaboard plains is glad to crouch by the fire and wrap himself in his warmest robes, while in the heat of the short summer he must advance beneath the fervid blaze of an eastern sun and amid whirling clouds of dust.

It was in the north-eastern part of this plain that Galatia was situated, a rude and uninviting province, in the very heart of the interior. But its rudeness and backwardness were further aggravated by the difficulty of reaching it. From any of the sunny and fertile plains of the south and south-east it could only be approached by crossing the snowy range of Mount Taurus. Four hundred miles of steep, lofty, rugged, and, save at three or four spots, impassable mountains separated it from the wealth and culture of the plains. The most accessible of its passes, the famous "Cilician Gates," which breaks through the range between mountains rising to a height of more than ten thousand feet, is eighty miles in length. In climbing, either by it or by any other of the accustomed routes, the traveller passes through some of the wildest and grandest scenery in the world.

The mountains consist wholly of limestone, and therefore the steep pathways, paved in ancient times, appear as white as if made of marble. This narrow, white, and broken path winds everywhere among tremendous precipices and narrow gorges covered thickly with pine and oak. In winter, or at the colder seasons, the short streams which tear their way through the dark forests to the narrow band of sea-plain below, quite fill the narrowest parts of the passes, sweep away the frail bridges, and put the life of the traveller in imminent danger.

Nor are perils of another kind wanting. Crouching in those black trackless woods were the wild Isaurian and Pisidian robbers, and woe to the traveller who should try to slip through their ambush without the protection of a large company. Thus, to the barriers set by nature, man added one more formidable; and, accordingly, few travellers from the south would be found on these roads except at the

beginning of summer, when great bands of shepherds left the hot and grassless plains, with flocks and herds, to find pasturage in the green cool *yailahs*, or hollows, of the table-land above.

This short account of the Asian tableland and the approach to it, may enable us to understand not only the rudeness and backwardness of the central tribes, but also the indisposition of any but the boldest and most enthusiastic to penetrate the country.

When John Mark stood below, at Perga, on the Pamphylian plain, looking up to the savage ranges of the Taurus, dark with oak and pine up to their snowy crowns, and thought of the terrors of the ascent, and of those perils by rivers and perils by robbers which St. Paul encountered there, is it very wonderful that his heart failed him, and he left Paul and his uncle to prosecute their dangerous journey alone?

We have seen the effect likely to be produced upon the character of the Galatians by the remoteness and inaccessibility of their country. It now remains to take into account the effects of race. No doubt in the days of St. Paul there would be a sprinkling of Greeks from the western seaboard, of Jewish traders from the south, and even of Romans charged with the necessary duties of government. But the mass of the population consisted of two races: the Phrygian aborigines, who constituted the lower class; and the Asian Gauls, who had conquered them, and settled in their country, very much as the Norman conquerors settled among our Saxon forefathers in England.

I will say something first about the Phrygian basis of the people. All authorities are agreed that the Phrygian race was the most ancient race in the country, their origin being lost in the mists of prehistoric times. Modern authorities,

however, are disposed to identify them with that ancient Pelasgic race which was found at the dawn of history in all parts of Greece, Italy, and Asia Minor; and to find the original home of both races in the highlands of Armenia. At one period, before the incursions of the Semitic races from the south-east, and of the Thracians from the north-west, it is supposed that the Phrygians occupied the whole of Asia Minor. This conclusion becomes immensely interesting in the light of the greatest and most recent archæological discovery of our own days.

All readers of the Bible will remember that a people called the Hittites dwelt in the days of Abraham as far south as Hebron. It was from them that he purchased the cave of Machpelah as a burying-place. At the time of the Israelite invasion of Canaan they had been driven northward. But it was against their serried lines of chariots that the Israelites had to contend at the decisive battle of Merom. In later days we find their soldiers of fortune leading the armies of David and Solomon; and we read later still that when the Syrians broke up in panic from the siege of Samaria, it was "for fear of the kings of the Hittites."

Of the existence of these people classical history was absolutely silent. Accordingly, this fact was cited by a great scholar and critic now living, as a proof of the inaccuracy of the sacred history. How could such a people as the Hittites, it was urged, had they ever existed, have so utterly dropped out of sight? The last word of secular history, however, had not yet been uttered about this ancient people.

The hieroglyphics of Egypt have been consulted, and what do they tell us? That before the time of Moses, in the days of Egypt's mightiest Pharaoh, a treaty was made between the great Rameses and the king or grand-duke of

the Hittites, who had waged fierce wars with him on equal terms. We find that the Hittite king had drawn his armies and resources, not only from the Syrian and Mesopotamian highlands, but also from all the tribes of Asia Minor.

Pictures of these Hittite warriors appear on the monuments, and they represent a non-Semitic, probably a Turanian race. Only a few years ago Professor Sayce noticed what former observers had failed to remark, that the Hittite warriors are represented as wearing boots with turned-up toes, like those which are to this day worn among the snowy uplands of the Taurus. To these discoveries the cuneiform inscriptions of Assyria have added their testimony. They speak of a great Hittite kingdom which existed and waged war in Mesopotamia nearly two thousand years before Christ, before Abraham left Ur of the Chaldees.

Now who were these mighty people; whence came they, and from what regions of the earth did they draw those vast resources of men and money which enabled them thus to hold the balance of power between the great empires of Egypt and Assyria. Again a new discovery has helped us to an answer. Within the last few years inscriptions have been found and partly read in all parts of Syria and Asia Minor, in a script which is neither that of Egypt nor of Assyria, but of that mighty Hittite race, which for more than a thousand years held supreme dominion in Western Asia.

Comparing all these sources of information, the ablest experts of the present day have come to the following conclusions:—

The Hittites were probably a Turanian race who had their original home on the lofty mountain plateau of Anatolia, east of the Halys, the very region from which

the Phrygians or Pelasgians came. They brought with them a culture and a religion derived originally from Chaldæa, the mighty mother of all Cushite and Semitic civilisation. It was the Nana of Babylon who in another form became their great goddess Atargatis, the Ashtoreth of the Canaanites, the Cybele of the Phrygians. It is too early yet to say that Hittites, Phrygians, and Pelasgians were one people. Perhaps they were not, but only successive migrations of kindred races from the same Asian uplands. This, however, is certain, that they came from one home, had one religion, and found the central scene of their empire in one country, Asia Minor.

Here, then, we have something definite about that Phrygian race which formed the lower stratum of the population of Galatia in the time of St. Paul. And we find that the worship of the mighty mother at Pessinus, with its eunuch priests, its mysterious rites, and wild orgiastic dances, was nothing else but a form of the sensual nature-worship which, so far as we know, had its rise in the plains of Chaldæa, where the ancestors of Abraham knew it, and under its inspiration worshipped other gods.

But now I have said that, superimposed on this lower Phrygian layer of population, there was another and a conquering element, which, indeed, gave its determining character to the whole. We are startled by the sudden apparition of the Western Celts in the very heart of Asia. How came they there; standing out alone, amidst the detritus of early races, a kind of boulder people? To this question we can give a very definite answer, for the eastward migration of these Celts took place in the full daylight of history.

The Celts appear to represent that portion of the Aryan race which occupied the central and southern regions of

their wide territory. Moved, then, either by the pressure of increasing numbers, or by the restlessness of their disposition, great hordes of them migrated eastward within historic times.

It was a side-wave of this great flood of people which poured over the Apennines, under Brennus, and submerged Rome, thence spreading itself out in weaker waves over Southern Italy. A hundred years later, another horde from the same western hive, swarming eastward, threw itself on Thrace and Macedonia. It was a part of this body which endeavoured to plunder Delphi; but, being repulsed, its remnants were headed back upon the main body of the eastward-moving current. All passage to the southward being thus denied them, it became necessary that they should either retrace their steps or force their way still further eastward.

The beaten tribes seem to have pursued the former course, wandering away, and being, so to speak, lost in space. Those, however, who had not joined in the disastrous southern raids pressed on, and, forcing their way across the Hellespont, landed in Asia Minor. There, for many years, they fought and slew and plundered, partly on their own account, and partly as mercenaries of the petty kings of the country, till at last, suffering a great defeat from the King of Pergamum, they were hemmed into the province where they finally settled, and which was called after them Galatia, or Gallo-Græcia, Greece of the Gauls.

It were useless to follow them farther in their tumultuous history. For our purpose it is more to the point to observe that, like many a conquering race, while retaining their own language they adopted the religion and caught no little of the sensuality and effeminacy of the degenerate people they had subdued. Still, however, "it was the Celtic blood," as

a great critic has remarked, "which gave its distinctive colour to the Galatian character, and separated them by so broad a line from their nearer neighbours."

For our purpose, then, it becomes important to ask what, according to the testimony of contemporaries of St. Paul, were the special traits of the Celtic character? The Gauls are everywhere credited with the special excellences which Thierry attributes to them, "with a personal valour which is without its equal among ancient peoples; with a spirit frank, impetuous, open to all impressions, and eminently intelligent." But, on the other hand, they are said to have had all the faults which he acknowledges, "extreme changeableness, an absence of constancy, a marked repugnance to those ideas of discipline and order so powerfully felt among the Germanic races, an excessive ostentation, and a perpetual disunion, the effect of extreme vanity."

Cæsar charges them with fickleness and excessive love of change. So eager were they, he says, for news that they would gather tumultuously around any passing stranger and detain him, even against his will, till he had satisfied their curiosity. In religious worship he charges them with "an excessive devotion to external observances;" and this ritualistic bent of the Celtic mind has persisted to our own times.

Only the other day, at the funeral of a great poet, who, refused the prayers of the Church, torches and urns and tawdry decorations were borrowed from the ritual of a dead paganism to replace the discarded inscription and cross. Ritualism of some kind the Celt must have. His sensuous impressionable nature seems to require it. Truth must be externalized and presented to his sight before he seems able to grasp it. Even holiness, in order to produce its full impression on him, must exhibit itself in the pallor and leanness, the fasts, mortifications, and solitude of the ascetic.

We cannot be astonished, then, when we find the Gauls of Asia succumbing so easily to the passionate ritualism of the Phrygian cultus; nor even when we find them so ready to combine with it, for a time, every new ritualistic worship which presented itself.

It is a striking fact that each of their three capital cities had its own prevailing form of worship. At Pessinus they worshipped the Phrygian mother of the gods, continuing their devotion to her service, even when the black, ugly fetish, which was supposed to have fallen from heaven, had been removed to Rome; at Tavium the prevailing worship was that of the Greek Zeus; while at Ancyra the new Emperor-worship was established, and a temple of white marble was erected to Augustus by the united contributions of Asia.

A people so fickle, so prone to change, so ready to welcome any new thing, would be quite likely to give the apostle of a new faith, like St. Paul, a favourable hearing. But how came they, it may be asked, with their ritualistic heredity, to welcome and adopt a faith so purely spiritual as that proclaimed by St. Paul? St. Paul's preaching had other things, I answer, to commend it to them, besides its novelty.

The Apostle, it would seem, had not intended to stay in Galatia, but, crossing hastily the central tableland, to press on to the more hopeful region of Lydia, with its great cities. Midway, however, in his course he was arrested by an attack of that mysterious malady which he calls his thorn, or stake, in the flesh. It seems quite certain that this was either an epileptic affection, like that under which our great King Alfred suffered all his life, or the terrible Eastern ophthalmia, which, besides being exquisitely painful, grievously disfigured those who suffered from it. In either

case, it would not seem as if the Apostle was at this juncture a promising missionary to so vain and impressionable a people as the Gauls. But we must remember their ascetic conceptions of holiness. Would not the contrast between the frail messenger and his mighty preaching be likely to produce a striking effect upon such people?

St. Paul has been called by a modern scholar "an ugly little Jew." Beyond doubt the judgment of many of his contemporaries was substantially the same; for at Corinth it was the common reproach of his enemies that "his bodily presence was weak and his speech contemptible." He possessed none of the graces either of person or of rhetoric. Pale, meagre, and low of stature, his very aspect was an offence to the æsthetic Greeks. Simple and direct in character, he was too earnestly bent on delivering his message to waste time or strength on the mere forms of expression, like the mercenary sophists of Greece, who felt conscious that they must compensate by beauty of form for poverty of matter. His great thoughts, which shook the world, seem to have rushed forth in whatever words appeared at the moment to give them freest course and clearest utterance.

But just those things which would be a scandal to the Greeks might be most exactly adapted to the needs and taste of a rude and simple people like the Galatians. Ever the Celtic race has demanded before all things earnestness. Thought they love, learning they admire, and even rhetoric; but all with them is nothing if not charged with the lightning force of enthusiasm. It was the earnestness of the early Methodist preachers which swayed the minds and bowed the hearts of the Celts of England, the Welsh and Cornish peasantry.

And never, surely, since the world began was there

a preacher more earnest and enthusiastic than St. Paul. Himself he had long ago forgotten. He had sunk his very being in the Lord he loved. So utterly engrossed, indeed, was he in the work of Christ's kingdom that no other interest seems to have dwelt for a moment in his soul. He passes through the grandest scenery in the world without even an allusion to it. War and politics might not exist for any notice he takes of them. His heart is with his Saviour; his interests are in heaven; and the one work to which he bends the whole energies of his mighty spirit is the work of making men love Christ, and of delivering them from the slavery of sin.

Conceive, then, this feeble, insignificant-looking man, racked by pain, and disfigured by disease, so driven along, nevertheless, by the imperious enthusiasm within, that he cannot be silent, first opening his lips among that rude, impressionable people. Contempt, perhaps, they may have felt at first; but as the voice gathered strength, and as words came more freely, now in orderly sequence, and now in lightning flashes of inspiration, uttering thoughts almost too great for words, and ever and anon broken and shattered by the might of an emotion which overpowered alike both speaker and hearer, think how that first impression must have been changed, how they must have seen St. Paul, as a Yorkshire peasant once said that he saw Wilberforce, "growing visibly greater as he went on." The result was astonishing. The orator took their hearts by storm. There was nothing they would not have given him.

He reminds them in his letter that "they did not despise nor loathe the temptation in his flesh." They received him, on the contrary, as an angel of God, as Jesus Christ Himself. Yea, if that would have availed him anything, they "would have plucked out their very eyes and have given them to

him." But, alas! they were Gauls, with all the fickleness of their race, with its passionate love of ritual exaggerated by Phrygian mixture; and, as we shall see in the next lecture, it only needed a certain kind of temptation to turn their love into indifference, their reverence into insolence, their spiritual freedom into legal bondage, their promising beginning into a threatening and all but fatal fall. In this lecture we have dealt with the Galatian conversion; in the next we shall have to consider the Galatian lapse; and we shall find, I think, in its history and character weighty lessons and impressive warnings.

II.

We have to ask to-day the question, what was the influence under the impulse of which the Galatians fell? And that brings us into the very heart of a controversy, now, indeed, in its unmediated antagonism a thing of the past, but still living on, and revived a few years ago by Professor Pfleiderer, not in Berlin, where he is Professor of Theology, but in London.

The theory of the earlier Tübingen school, that there was a bitter feud between the apostles of the circumcision and of the uncircumcision, and an irreconcilable opposition between their doctrines, may now be regarded, to use the words of Archdeacon Farrar, "as a religious romance," founded on the words of our epistle, "before that certain came from James."

I am far, however, from thinking that the controversy aroused by the publication of that romance was useless. It brought out a great deal that was interesting about the currents of opinion in the Primitive Church. It showed us that the Church of the first century, instead of enjoying that purity and peace which we fondly attribute to it, was even more distracted by disputes and slanders than that of our own time; that the golden age is quite as much a dream in the history of the Christian Church as in the traditions of classical poetry; that human nature has never for long been less intractable than we find it; and that, especially, the Apostle Paul was pursued and persecuted

by a Christian sect with an unscrupulous and malignant hatred which might even have excited surprise amongst ourselves.

I see that Professor Pfleiderer still believes, not only that the Gospel according to St. Luke was an eirenicon between the Pauline Gospel according to St. Mark and the anti-Pauline Gospel according to St. Matthew, but also that when St. James wrote, "Ye see that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only," he made a direct polemical reference, not to those who had abused St. Paul's doctrine, but to that Apostle himself. I can see no sufficient justification for such conclusions. They appear to me to be the last survivals of a theory being rapidly driven out of the field of thought, and only now interesting as forcing us to contemplate steadily initial differences in Christian doctrine which we might otherwise overlook or treat too lightly.

That there was a difference of mental attitude and disposition between St. Paul and St. James, and that this difference in the nature of the two men expressed itself in the form of their teaching, and carried them not seldom into sympathy with opposite sides, is, I believe, all but demonstrated. That there is not, for instance, in the whole Epistle of St. James a single direct reference either to the incarnation, the atonement, justification by faith, or the conflict between the flesh and the spirit, is a fact which speaks volumes.

To review the controversy left us by the Tübingen school would be, however, an endless and unprofitable task. Instead, therefore, of wasting your time in such an effort, I will endeavour to lay before you as concisely as I can the true history of the rise and progress of the Jewish-Christian opposition to St. Paul.

It will be necessary to begin with the Apostle's own

proof of the independence of that preaching which he calls "his gospel." It is certainly startling, when we come to think of the matter closely, to be told, by one who never knew the Lord in the flesh, that he neither received the truth which he preached from man, neither was he taught it, but "by the revelation of Jesus Christ." What can the Apostle mean? we are disposed to ask. Does he mean that he knew nothing whatever of what the Lord said and did while He was upon earth? If so, how can he be a Christian? where can he have learned the spiritual principles of his Master's teaching? Surely, in this case, he ought to lay claim to be an original founder, and not a mere disciple of Jesus Christ. So far, however, is the Apostle from making any such claim, that there is not one of the twelve of whom we could say as unreservedly as of St. Paul that he entirely lost himself in the Saviour. He not only calls himself the "slave" of his heavenly Master, declaring that he is determined to know nothing among men but "Jesus Christ and Him crucified," but he looks upon all his work as the mere outflow of Christ's energy, and upon his own spiritual existence even, as nothing but an indwelling of Christ within his soul.

If, then, he owes everything to Christ, and yet gained nothing from men, can he mean to say that he was made to live over again in vision the whole earthly career of his Master, and so, as it were, to see and hear for himself at first hand? No shadow of such a claim is anywhere made.

What, then, does St. Paul mean by claiming independence for his gospel? I think we are compelled to conclude that when he spoke of his gospel as distinct from that of others, he was referring to that special form of truth into which the

great spiritual principles and doctrines connected with his Master's life and death had been cast in the course of his own meditation and teaching. Baur himself observes that St. Paul must have been well acquainted with the outward facts of his Master's earthly career. These he might easily have learnt, if indeed he needed then to learn them, while staying with Ananias at Damascus after his conversion. But every ordinary Christian knew those facts. And to know them was to be a long way still from St. Paul's conception of his Master's eternal relation to mankind.

Many vital questions would remain still to be asked. How had Christ's death and resurrection affected the application of the principles of his teaching? How had his relation to the Church been changed by the outpouring of Pentecost? Above all, how was a Christian's relation to the law altered by the death of Him who bore its curse? Upon this last question especially the Lord had left no explicit instructions. He had said indeed that His kingdom was to be as wide as the world. But then, as every Jew hoped that obedience to the law would be equally universal, there was nothing in mere universality to limit legal obligation.

No doubt Jesus had carried His spiritualizing of the law so far as to imply in effect its abolition. For what would become, for instance, of all that mass of legal precepts, which implied service at the temple, if in the new era men were to worship the Father neither at Samaria nor at Jerusalem? Or how could a law command universal and perpetual respect of any portion of which it could be truthfully said that it was not good in itself, but only "added because of the hardness of men's hearts"? Still all this was so far mere matter of inference. And before men will surrender the habits, and especially the privileges,

of ages and generations, they demand an authority more explicit than mere inference.

To a thoughtful man, taking this into account, the immediate outlook of Christianity at the period of St. Paul's conversion was very grave indeed. No doubt it had made many converts among the chosen people. But then all these were zealots for the law. They frequented the temple services and sacrifices, kept the Sabbaths and ordinances, observed all the national laws and customs, and, in a word, appeared most likely to their neighbours to have become the better Jews for having turned Christians. This appears all the more probable from the fact that after the short, sharp spasm of persecution, of which the chief victims were first Stephen, and then after an interval James, the Church of Jerusalem had peace for twenty years. Christians, indeed, in Jerusalem would appear to their neighbours, and probably to themselves, to be that portion of Israel who believed that the long-expected Messiah had come in Jesus of Nazareth, had sanctified their hearts by His Spirit, and would soon come again to restore the kingdom to Israel.

There was nothing in such a position as this, either on the one side to excite bitter animosity or on the other to impel Christians to separate themselves from the law; and it really seemed for a moment as if the mighty enthusiasm of Pentecost might sink into respectable legalism, as if Christianity might be strangled in its cradle by the iron hand of the law, as if it might sink into an obscure Jewish sect, and disappear in the national ruin, instead of breaking its fetters, spreading its mighty spiritual pinions, and claiming the universal heaven as its home.

But then, just at this crisis, the Divine Lord of the Kingdom fulfilled His eternal counsel by the miraculous capture (to use a Pauline figure) of the Great Apostle of the

Gentiles. To St. Paul, from that hour, Jesus Christ was not the mere Jewish Master who had taught and lived by the lake and on the hills of Galilee, but the Divine Man from heaven, the risen Conqueror, who had arrested him in his career of persecution, and sent him to labour at the ends of the earth. Not then to those Judæan teachers did he go, who were apparently settling down into a received position among the Jews; but away into the far Arabian wilderness, away, I believe, like Elijah, to the terrible rocks of desert Sinai itself. There he would be still, away from the noise and babble of the world. There, alone with God, he would commune with his own heart on the meaning of the awful, blessed thing which had happened to him. There, in those stern desolations, which spoke so solemnly of the law's iron demands, he would ponder the relations of God's ancient word to the soul-shaking thoughts which under Divine inspiration were shaping themselves within him. He had a present to realize, a past to understand; and, in the light of both, a great vague, heart-troubling future to anticipate. There he lived, thought, and prayed, how long we know not, but long enough at least to enable him to gain a firm spiritual hold of the truth he was seeking, the relation, viz., of his risen and glorified Lord to his own heart, to the word of God, to the Christian Church, and to the miserable dying heathen world.

Then, after three years, he went to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. A blessed season of refreshing, we cannot doubt, for the solitary and thought-vexed man. For not less by his sunny Christian sympathy than by his affectionate memories of their common master, St. Peter must have comforted the heart and enlarged the knowledge of the mighty convert. His visit would seem to have been for the Apostle Paul an almost private one,

for other of the apostles, he tells us, he saw none in the course of it, save James, the Lord's brother. Now the Apostle omits a long and, for him, somewhat stormy period, that of his first call to missionary work, and that of his first Gentile mission in company with Barnabas.

On their return to Antioch the apostles are first confronted by that Jewish-Christian opposition which was henceforth to be the worst earthly cross which St. Paul was called upon to bear. Certain men came down from Judea, who began to teach the Gentile brethren at Antioch that it was necessary for them to be circumcised. Paul and Barnabas resisted this claim with all their might. From what we know of the former, we may be sure that he would have resisted it to the end had he stood alone in the Church and in the world. But in that event the Christian Church must have been divided into two camps, which, instead of joining their forces to assail sin and ignorance, would have exhausted each other in mutual conflicts. This must be avoided at all hazards. It was resolved, therefore, to refer the whole question in dispute to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem. There, for the first and only time in his life, St. Paul met the three great pillars of the Christian Church, Peter and John, and James, the Lord's brother, two of these four, at least, being the greatest prophets and thinkers of their time.

Never in all her stormy history has a greater crisis overtaken the Church. For the issue to be decided was not less than this, whether the Church of Christ should remain a Jewish sect or become a world-wide kingdom. The action of the Apostle Paul was as wise as it was self-effacing. He went at once to the leaders of the Christian Church, and communicated to them clearly what that Gospel was which he had been preaching among the Gentiles. At once they

accepted it as the truth, and gave to him and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship. At the council which was assembled to consider the matter, Paul and Barnabas, with admirable wisdom, said nothing about principles, but confined themselves to giving a faithful account of the manner in which God the Holy Ghost had blessed their preaching.

With good and pious men this is always a powerful argument. It was the *fait accompli* which silenced those who objected that Peter had eaten with men uncircumcised in the house of Cornelius. "The Holy Ghost fell on them," cried the Apostle, "and who was I that I could resist God?" It was substantially the same argument which was advanced now by Paul and Barnabas, and to it, we may suppose, even more than to the Pauline address of St. Peter, was it due that opposition faded away. The matter seemed to be decided by apostolic authority and the act of God. But then arose James, and though he has nothing to urge either against the principles of Peter or the acts of Paul, he is obviously not prepared to advance as far as either in practice. He proposes accordingly a compromise, which, while affirming the liberty of the Gentiles, shall leave Jewish converts to live as they had lived hitherto: providing, moreover, that for charity's sake, to avoid giving offence to Jewish brethren, the Gentiles shall observe certain restrictions in eating.

Substantially this was a victory for St. Paul. On the main point of the obligation of circumcision, it affirmed the freedom of the Gentiles. And at first, perhaps, this might have seemed all which was necessary. Time, however, soon revealed the essential weakness of this compromise. In such a Church, for instance, as that at Antioch, where Jewish and Gentile Christians mixed at meals, and specially at the Agapæ, dissension might at any time be introduced

by Jewish brethren. They might urge that to a proper keeping of the law, separation from the meals of the uncircumcised, even when those uncircumcised were Christian brethren, was an absolute necessity. Relaxations might be permitted, no doubt, to the weakness of the poor Gentiles; but still, you know, if they were asked privately their own opinion of such Christianity, they must say that the less they had to do with it the better.

At Jerusalem, under the presidency of the Lord's own brother, they felt themselves in the kingdom of God, but at Antioch or Ephesus, or any of those objectionable places in the Gentile outlands, while they would not positively say that they preferred synagogue to church, still it well-nigh came to that. They might, indeed, worship with such disciples, but as for eating with them, that they would never do, and they looked anxiously for the time when the leaders of the Church, discovering their mistake, would revert to the holy strictness of the yet uncorrupted Church of Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, how was St. Paul treating this question of allowed Jewish conformity? More and more he spoke of the law as a mere national code, good perhaps for the Jews so long as their national polity subsisted, but binding on no man whether born a Jew or a Gentile. Regeneration of heart could never be obtained along the line of obedience to law. In the battle against sin, law was nothing, and circumcision was nothing, but only faith, which worketh by love. A Gentile Christian was bound to avoid circumcision and holiday-keeping in order to show that he trusted only in the grace of Christ.

What bitter exasperation such teaching would produce among Christian Pharisees we can easily conceive. That the Gentile Christians in the name of Paul should brush aside their scruples, and laugh at their airs of superiority,

would be far worse than if some irreverent nonconformist or low churchman should rudely tell a ritualist nowadays that his religion was not one of clothes and postures, but of heart and life. Worse, I say, because the ritualism to which these Christian Pharisees clung so tenaciously was that of an alien faith. They could not call themselves Mosaists, and yet they wanted to live as Mosaists, and to impose a Mosaic manner of life upon all others, an inconsistency of which they must have been latently conscious, and which must have made them all the more ready to take offence, because it exposed them to a crushing answer.

At length the position became so intolerable that they resolved to endure it no longer, but to make an end of it at once by crushing Paul, its chief defender, before his admirers at Antioch. Their plot was astutely conceived. Not a word would they say against the decree of the council. The Gentiles should attend their unclean banquets without a word of protest from them. But then they would claim and publicly exercise those rights of which, thank God, the decree had not deprived them. By carefully abstaining from attendance at all Gentile meals they would mortify the pride of these upstarts and teach them their natural inferiority.

The time for this demonstration was craftily chosen. Peter and Paul and Barnabas were all at Antioch, and what they openly did in the presence of these great leaders could never afterwards be called in question. Day by day, then, the Jewish plotters passed the public boards of the Gentiles with cold and reserved demeanour, carefully separating themselves, and doubtless making as much stir as they could about their ostentatious ceremonialisms. Can you not easily realize the immense effect of such conduct upon the Gentile brethren? Do as they would, they could not

help respecting a Jew. Was not the Lord Jesus a Jew? Was not Paul, their great teacher, a Jew? Was not the mother Church of the whole Christian world still Jewish? And who were they, aliens born out of due time, to look down upon the children of the covenant? As then they saw the delegates from Jerusalem passing by the rooms where they ate, with ill-repressed disgust, what a chill must it have struck to the heart of their brotherly love, how it must have filled them with perplexed humiliation!

Nor was this the worst. Peter, the impressionable, felt himself in so false a position when these Jewish aristocrats passed by him at the Gentile tables, that, not to alienate the circumcision, he, too, passed away to the separate meals. How could he bear to meet his warmest friends and ablest supporters at Jerusalem with a cloud on their faces? Their friendship, at all events, he must not lose. Peter thus gone, Barnabas began to waver. Certainly it did seem a privilege to be able to eat with either Jews or Gentiles, as one pleased. No Gentile could go to the exclusive table. Might he not then even increase his influence with the Gentiles by showing that that table was open to him as well as to Peter? So, as one after another fell away, the poor Gentiles felt themselves thrust into an inferior place. They were made to feel that there was a church within a church, and that if they would advance into the holy place they must consent to be circumcised, and keep the whole law.

A cleverer plot was never laid; and had it not been for one man there can be little doubt that its success would have converted the Christian Church from that day onward into a Jewish sect, with the risen Jesus for its Messiah. The truth of God was put in danger; the hope of the world was being darkened; humanity was being robbed of its best treasure

But Paul was not the man to stand by silently and see such a thing done. So up he rose in the midst of them, at some meeting doubtless which was not a meal, and where all, including the apostles, were assembled. Not a word does he vouchsafe to the aristocrats. They, with their narrow-souled exclusiveness, had acted after their kind, and what they did mattered only to a few. But that Peter, the foremost man in Christendom, the man miraculously chosen to admit the Gentiles to the Christian Church, the man whose powerful pleading at the council had saved the Gentiles' freedom, that he should believe one thing and do another was intolerable.

Him at once, then, Paul attacks. "You are a Jew," he cries; "if then in times past you have eaten freely with the Gentiles, seeing no harm in it, how is it now that by your example you are teaching these Gentiles that they ought to live as Jews? Do you think that if you create a higher sacerdotal caste in the Church all these ignorant people will not be anxious to press into it? Besides, the evil is not only a practical, it is much more a doctrinal one. If you observe these Mosaic restrictions you acknowledge the binding obligation of the ceremonial law. Now, I appeal to you as an honest man, do you believe that? Nay, do we not both know that it is your faith, as it is mine, that 'a man is not justified by works of law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ'? How, then, can you be so unfaithful to your trust as to put it in peril by your equivocal conduct?"

It may seem little to us, perhaps, after all these years, when the fierce passions of the primitive age have burnt themselves out, that St. Paul had the courage to stand forth, and in the presence of the arrogant Pharisees to rebuke their greatest leader to his face. But not the less was it a grand and heroic deed; and not the less did it

carry with it far-reaching and momentous consequences. The whole Jerusalem plot was blown to pieces. These men could never afterwards creep into Gentile churches and allege that the great Peter had refused to eat with the uncircumcised, while their audacious champion Paul had held his peace. No, the result was of the very opposite kind. Peter was too honest a man to carry deception or unreality one step further, when once its inception had been faithfully pointed out to him. And therefore, from that time onward, the gratified Gentiles could report that the attempt to create a Jewish caste in the Church had indeed once been made at Antioch with the tacit support of Peter and Barnabas, but that as soon as Paul had lifted up his thunder-voice of truth all had submitted to it, and once more the Agapæ were eaten in common.

With the heart of a woman when his dear children forgot him, or treated him unkindly, Paul had the courage of an archangel when the truth of God was endangered. Mobs were nothing to him, and very little more were kings and procurators; but to have stood forth thus alone, not only against Peter, but also his own true yoke-fellow, Barnabas, to have thrown not only all fear but all friendship to the winds, when loyalty to the Lord Jesus demanded it, proves the Apostle to have been one of those great and finely-tempered souls, very rarely fashioned in our human clay, by which God executes the purposes of eternity.

Many were the lands and fortunes through which the glorious Apostle was to pass before his next and his bitterest trial from the Christian Pharisaic party was to come upon him. At first that party seems to have been paralysed by the terrible blow which St. Paul had dealt it. For of their movements during the three years of the Apostle's Ephesian

ministry we know little or nothing. At Ephesus, in the school of Tyrannus, St. Paul had time not only to preach to men from all parts of Greece and Asia, but also gradually and insensibly to beat out into perfect form and clear expression those views of human regeneration through Christ which he afterwards poured forth with such perfect mastery in the epistles to Galatia and Rome.

His own thoughts, I cannot but believe, were gradually clearing themselves of every confusing association. Their change in a positive direction may not have been marked, but, as his greater epistles show, they were becoming negatively sharper and less tolerant of unconformable elements. They were falling, too, into systematic shape, finding their logical relation to each other and the great thoughts of the earlier dispensation. Should any new need arise, the Apostle would be found ready to strike harder and straighter than ever before.

And soon a very terrible need approached. The Pharisaic Christian party were changing their tactics. St. Paul in person they dared not meet. His word was a thunderbolt which shattered their flimsy sophisms to pieces in a moment. But none the less they hated him, and were resolved upon destroying his influence. He might be great, but he was not ubiquitous, and the plan they now resolved on was characteristic of the slow, persistent, deadly hate of baffled fanatics.

While he was making his fine orations in the school of Tyrannus, and shining like a star before the motley crowds of Ephesus, they would quietly creep into the churches which he had left undefended in Greece and Galatia. No doubt it seemed to them that he had broken the terms of the Jerusalem compromise, for what else than that was it to deprive them practically of that Jewish privilege of

exclusiveness which the compromise had left untouched? They would, therefore, on their side, pay as little heed to its concessions. They would insist everywhere that the Gentiles must be circumcised, and keep the whole law.

But how were they to gain a hearing among St. Paul's own disciples? They must endeavour to discredit his person and undermine his apostolic authority. The Second Epistle to the Corinthians and that to the Galatians exhibit fully their *modus operandi.* St. Paul, they alleged, was no apostle at all. He had never seen the Lord, except in some vision which he was fond of talking about. So far, indeed, was he from being an apostle that he got his mission only from the subordinate church of Antioch. Let him show letters testimonial, if he had any, like those which they could themselves produce from the mother Church of Jerusalem, and James, the Lord's own brother. What was the worth of all Paul's arrogant boasting in the face of such proved defects as these? Again, he was teaching heresy. He told men that they need not keep the law. But who was it who had said that not one jot or tittle should by any means pass away from the law till all were fulfilled? Nay, his own practice condemned him. Who had circumcised Timothy? Who had become as a Jew to Jews that he might win Jews? He was a slippery and deceitful man, and as contemptible in speech and presence as he was heretical and untruthful in teaching. Nay, worse, did they not observe how craftily he disposed of the alms which he professed to gather for the poor saints at Jerusalem? It was all very well for him to work ostentatiously for his own bread, but let them inquire what became of the money which he professed to forward by Titus to Jerusalem. Were they going to be the bondslaves of such a charlatan as this? Were they going to allow

themselves to be separated by him from the holy severity of the glorious church at Jerusalem? Let them turn while yet there was time, repudiate this sham apostle's authority, and rest once more in the unity of Zion. How vile a tissue of false insinuations this was we know full well. But we can never know the anguish of heart with which the Apostle first heard, after his flight from Ephesus, that such things as these had been believed of him by his own children in the faith.

The mischief was bad enough at Corinth. But in Galatia everything for the moment seemed to be lost. Nothing had been easier than to play upon the fickleness and credulity of these ignorant Gauls. The new ritual which the Judaisers brought pleased them as a new toy pleases a child, and it promised them, beside, a new religion of forms far more easy to observe than the severe and lofty principles of spiritual Christianity. What was the Apostle to do? He was in Macedonia when all this disastrous intelligence poured in upon him. In his indignation, then, and anguish he sat down and wrote first the Second Epistle to the Corinthians, then that to the Galatians, and then, at no great distance of time, in a quieter tone, that systematic expansion of the Epistle to the Galatians which he sent to Rome.

So, the Church won some of her greatest treasures out of the envenomed hate of these despicable Christian Pharisees. St. Paul at once throws all compromise to the winds. He will keep no terms with such men. They have accused him of vacillating statements. He will put it out of their power, at any rate, to make that statement again. His words shall be such as no human being can mistake. Indeed, the crisis was of such a kind as to make the very plainest speech a simple necessity. The issue raised was

one of life or death, of gospel or no gospel, of freedom or bondage, of salvation or destruction. Not only those poor wavering Gauls, but the whole Church, yea, the whole human race, was interested in the result. It seemed as though the cause of humanity had been committed by the fiat of Providence to the Apostle's single arm, and by God's help he would not be wanting. Drawing then the sword, and throwing away the scabbard, he rushes to the front of battle, determined that he will not spare.

"I marvel," he cries to the foolish Gauls, "that ye are so soon moved away from Him that called you to another gospel." "Oh, stupid Galatians," slaves of your senses, who can believe nothing you do not see, did I not paint up Jesus crucified before your eyes, in lineaments so large, in colours so vivid, that you could make no mistake? Who, then, hath bewitched you with his evil eye? How is it that you are turning from the spirit to the flesh, from freedom to bondage, from Sarah to Hagar? How, having once known God, are ye turning again to the beggarly elements to which ye desire to become bondslaves? Law and circumcision, weeks and months and years, fasts, sacrifices, festivals, and sabbaths, I tell you they are all nought. "Neither circumcision is anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." Will you tell me that surely you are no worse for circumcision, even if you be no better? I deny it. I will not suffer you to be circumcised. "If you be circumcised, you are debtors to do the whole law." "If you are circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing." Is that clear enough for you? Or do you wish me to be still more explicit? Well, then, I tell you that your fine, new gospel is no gospel at all. It is a fall from grace. It is an apostacy. He who teaches it is a traitor to Christ, and a foe to Christ's silly lambs who have gone bleating after him. Let him be

anathema. And lest you should suppose this to be nothing more than the utterance of an uncontrollable anger, I repeat it solemnly and deliberately, Let him be anathema, let him be cut off from the body of Christ.

So he goes thundering over their heads, scattering all their new-sprung conceits and insolences as the storm scatters the dry leaves of autumn and drives the obscene birds of night to the darkness of their nether caves. As once before by the terror of his presence, so now by the might of his words, St. Paul broke and scattered the dark bands of sacerdotal insolence and tyranny, and planted the flag of spiritual freedom where it has been floating ever since, on the height of his glorious epistle.

What lessons his polemic had for his own time we have seen; what lessons it has for us I must endeavour to explain in my next lecture.

III.

When we have cast aside what is of only temporary interest in the Epistle to the Galatians, we find that the Apostle Paul is dealing therein with a question of permanent importance, what, namely, can secure the happiness and spiritual renewal of the human race? He deals with this question negatively and positively. Negatively he affirms that happiness and regeneration cannot be secured by works of a law; positively that they can be secured by the help of the Spirit of Christ.

In the present lecture, I shall consider the bearing of his negative doctrine on some theories of our own time. One of those theories is that the highest good can be secured for humanity by a better distribution of material possessions. This is the favourite theory of the noisier and coarser of the leaders of European nihilism and socialism. Like most incomplete explanations of life, it is not without its truth, and it is by virtue of that truth that it lives. Assuredly, so long as any large proportion of the human race is without sufficient food, decent lodging, and leisure enough to develop its higher nature, so long as its whole time is taken up by mechanical drudgery, and its whole interest is concentrated upon an absorbing anxiety to keep hunger at bay, it cannot realize either happiness or the highest form of human life. That is why all lovers of their race must ever take the deepest interest in the labour question; and why,

moreover, religious men are specially called upon to help to settle that question in the general interest.

But when men go farther than this and insist that, with a fair distribution of material wealth, all the pressing wants of humanity will be satisfied, they not only take the part for the whole, but the lesser part for the greater. It does not follow that if all the loaves in the world were divided equally among all the eaters men would be either better or happier. Happiness, as Carlyle pointed out, depends not so much on what a man has as on what he demands. If, therefore, with an increasingly equal distribution of material means it should happen that the individual desire for more develops in an increasing proportion, the progress of equal distribution will be accompanied in the majority by heightened discontent with their position. And precisely this consequence is what many able sociologists fear.

Education is enlarging the expectations of the people, and if they be led to believe that the best blessings which life can give them are those purchasable with money, it is not at all unlikely that those heightened expectations may lead to envy and discontent, the fruitful parents of misery.

Von Hartmann has pointed out that though crimes of violence are diminishing among the working classes, deceit, chicane, and smart practices show a suspicious tendency to increase ; while every now and then, as in the reign of the Paris Commune, when the muzzle of law is removed, it is found that there are people ready to indulge in the vilest and most sanguinary excesses. "So far," in his opinion, "the all-devouring selfishness of man has not lessened ; it is only artificially dammed in by the dikes of the law and of civil society."

Envy, too, is said by careful observers to be growing in Europe. Men seek to possess not merely enjoyment, but

as much of it as their neighbours, and would rather be a little poorer, if only thus they could provide that nobody should be richer than themselves. That is the main reason for the demand in Socialistic Europe that the existence of private property in the form of capital shall be arbitrarily forbidden. When no man can increase his property, no man can be richer than his neighbour, and though under such a *régime* it is certain that the aggregate wealth of the community and even the share of individuals would be less, still envy would be gratified by seeing everyone as poor as itself.

I do not doubt that there are generous enthusiasts who advocate socialism for very different reasons. It pains them to see men suffering hardships which they do not share. Their wealth burns them like a corrosive, their comfort disgusts them like a crime, so long as they see their brethren miserable and destitute. And so, impelled by this noble feeling, they wish to take the shortest cut to a remedy, forgetting that their system would level men down instead of lifting them up, and that equality of material means would be dearly purchased by the abolition of individual independence, the stimulus of advancement, and the sanctity of the home. Let us give to these enthusiasts all the credit they deserve, but also let us not forget that theirs is not the common case, that, in general, envy is a mightier force than love in these socialistic movements. If this be so, then certainly, since happiness depends rather on a man's disposition than on his means, the human race might be far from being made happier by the success of the socialistic movement.

Yes ; but, urge some, we are not so much depending on socialism for our paradise of the future as upon the advance of the practical arts, under the guidance of science ; upon

the increase of the productiveness of the earth ; upon the multiplication of conveniences in lighting, sanitation, locomotion, and the like ; upon the invention of labour-saving machines ; and upon a better distribution of political power in the world. Well, suppose that these advantages had increased a hundredfold, and suppose that a vast increase of population had not very largely neutralized such advantages, how much nearer do you suppose that they would have brought the human race to universal happiness ? Remember that the race is but a multiplication of individuals, and that very much as each feels, so will the whole. What conscious gratification, then, let me ask you, do you daily feel in being lighted by gas rather than by candles, in travelling twice as fast by rail as you did by coach, in inhabiting a house of eight rooms instead of one of four ? You experienced a momentary satisfaction, no doubt, if you happened to live when first the change was made. But how quickly that sense of satisfaction faded. Your advantages became a mere matter of course to you, and you immediately began to hope for something better.

Ask the rich man how much happier he feels for his customary enjoyments. He would feel the loss of them, no doubt, as a distinct misery, and he is by so much more the slave of circumstances. But their mere possession is just as much a matter of course as breathing the air is. And he is always, besides, longing for something more. You can, in fact, no more feed the human soul on bread than you can the human body on a stone. And the idea, therefore, of increasing the general happiness by any possible arrangements of a pecuniary or political kind, apart from something better than they, is one of the most egregious of all our modern illusions. When we demand better food, better lodging, and more leisure for the poor, it is not

because we think that these things in themselves are sufficient to produce happiness, but because we believe that they would liberate time and energy for the pursuit of something better than themselves. They would remove hindrances, they would furnish facilities, and they would do nothing more.

"Precisely," exclaim others of our modern theorists; "that is exactly our own view. We do not expect more happiness from a changed distribution of material comforts, but from better conceptions of the true conditions of moral and social improvement. Give men a more accurate knowledge of what they should do and they will do it. Show them what to think about themselves and their neighbours and the relations which bind them together; multiply text-books on these subjects for the young, and larger treatises for their elders, and you will soon see a great moral improvement in the world."

So they speak. And this theory of theirs not only guides their practical action, but also expresses itself in the direction and result of their historical studies. They ransack the ancient literatures of the world for evidences of high and noble thought; and if they should anywhere find what they seek, or something even resembling what they seek, they straightway cite it as a true measure of the life of the age and country of its origin. Did the Vedic Indians ever talk about Dyaus Pitar, the Heaven-Father: that is proof enough that they all lived habitually under the inspiration of the loftiest religious intuitions. Did Confucius ever say that "a man should not do to his neighbour what he would not have done to himself:" that, again, is proof enough that the Chinese people once lived on the same high level of moral feeling as that to which true Christians have attained. They knew so much; *ergo*, they were so much. No conclusion could, in fact, be more untrustworthy.

The occasional outbreak in all lands and times of these high religious and moral intuitions proves unquestionably the depth and richness of man's speculative faculty. It shows that the human mind is the natural mirror of great thoughts, the inexhaustible fountain of lofty intuitions, and that no spiritual shipwreck, how disastrous soever, can quench the inner light, or drown the hopes and aspirations of our race.

But it is one thing to see and another to do. It is one thing to discern a law and another to obey it. It is one thing for a great sage or prophet to proclaim a lofty truth; it is another for his people to apprehend and realize it. "Virtue," says Schopenhauer, "cannot be taught any more than genius. It would be, therefore, just as absurd to expect that our moral systems will produce virtuous, holy, and noble men, as that our æsthetics will produce poets, painters, and musicians." He is never weary of repeating Seneca's maxim, "*Velle non discitur*," willing is not learnt. And willing, not thinking, is the matter of prime moment in action. "Will is first and original," he cries. "Man does not come into the world as a moral cipher, merely to get a knowledge of the things in it, and thereupon determine to be this or that." He comes with a character, and though you may change his actions by increasing his knowledge, the intentions and dispositions expressed by those actions you will not change, except by producing some effect upon his character.

Thus if a man, tired of the pleasures of sense, and convinced that he must soon lose them, changes the form of his life only for the purpose of obtaining certain other pleasures for himself beyond the grave, though his acts may be different, and far less injurious to his neighbours, yet his disposition remains what it was, purely selfish. To change

the man you must change his will, or, if you like so to express it, those realized tendencies of will which are called character.

Professor Green is equally emphatic upon this point. "As Plato said," he observes, "till the character is set in the direction of the ideal, a theory of the ideal can be of no value for the improvement of conduct." "An ethical teacher," he remarks, "will not take it for a reproach to be reminded that no philosopher can supply a moral dynamic." And again: "No one can convey a good character to another. Everyone must make his character for himself. All that one man can do to make another better is to remove obstacles, and supply conditions favourable to the formation of a good character."

Von Hartmann puts this conclusion in almost brutal language. "The reader," he observes, "was in error if he sought to find consolation and hope in philosophy. . . . Philosophy is hard, cold, and insensitive as a stone. And if the strength of man is unequal to the task of enduring the results of thought, if the heart, convulsed with woe, stiffens with horror and breaks into despair, then philosophy registers those facts as valuable psychological material for its investigations."

One can have little enough sympathy with such expressions as these, but not the less is it necessary to note the truth which they express, that the most exact thinking can no further affect conduct than by setting before the mind what it ought to do, what it will consult its own highest interest and welfare in doing. Whether, however, these monitions will be regarded, whether men will be any the better for the exact rules and results of ethical or other science, depends still on the state of the will, and on that only.

Some persons still dispute the truth of this conclusion by

trying to represent human action as the result, not of will, but of motives presented to the will, meaning by motives solicitations of desire. Professor Green's masterly analysis has, however, effectually disposed of this subterfuge. He admits, of course, that there cannot be such a thing as unmotived willing in an intelligent doing. But it by no means follows that motived willing is not free. Several solicitations, we will suppose, present themselves to a man's desires, which tend to draw him in different directions. The man surveys them. He considers with himself whether the following of one or of another will yield him the highest satisfaction or the greatest good. So far he is identified with none of them. They are outside him, and allure him merely. When, however, he wills to adopt one of them as means to his personal good, and so to realize it in action, he has made that motive his own, and he becomes aware of the fact by the appearance in his consciousness of a sense of personal responsibility for what he does. No doubt the present choice of his will is greatly determined by similar past acts of choice, by those formed tendencies of will which we mean when we talk of character.

But then, in every step of the formation of such character, there was a similarly free act of his will; so that character no more results from a mere mechanical following on of necessarily connected events, than does any single act of free determination.

Once more, then, we are driven to the conclusion that human goodness, and by consequence human happiness, depends ultimately on the state of the will. Whatever there is to increase virtue, improve human nature, and make life worthier and happier, must necessarily achieve its purpose by action upon the will, by giving to each man the power to present to himself and to realize as his highest personal

good those actions which are dominated and inspired by love of others. "Nothing," says Kant, "can be conceived in the world, or even out of it, which can be called good without qualification, but a good will;" for which the corresponding form in Professor Green's work is, "Every form of real goodness must rest on a will to be good, which had no object but its own fulfilment."

Seeing, then, that the human race can never be morally and spiritually elevated, or made truly happy, unless its individual members gain the will to be good, how, let us ask, is such a will to be obtained? It is a very popular answer to this question, by leaving the human race to the influence of its own inherent tendency to progress in the right direction.

But how, we are disposed to ask, do you arrive at the conclusion that there is any such inherent tendency in our race? Oh, we assume this, is not unfrequently the flippant rejoinder, as a consequence of the theory of development by natural selection. But now suppose that we grant that theory proved for the sphere of physical life, where everything proceeds according to unchanging law, and freedom is impossible: how does it follow that the same law will prevail in that sphere of which freedom is the necessary condition? If the lower animals had man's power of forming abstract conceptions, of adopting one or another of these as the representation of its own highest good, and of then freely realizing that representation in their life, is there anything more certain than that the law of development by natural selection would cease to operate? It would be necessarily displaced by the law of intelligent and free individual selection.

How, then, can it be reasonable to pass over into the moral sphere, without more ado, a law which only holds

good on the condition that its subjects shall not be free? If, then, this crude inference be reasonably barred, on what other grounds, may I ask, is it affirmed that there is a natural tendency in man to develop a will to be good, to seek self-satisfaction in those objects only which will destroy the selfish and develop the loving impulses within him? We assume it, it is sometimes said, because we observe such a progress in the history of the human race. But how is this so, if we exclude, as we obviously must, that particular area of human society in which it is alleged that man has received special help from the Spirit of Christ? Through recent discoveries we can test this conclusion by reference to the experience of six thousand years.

Do we find, then, among the races of men who have lived and flourished during that long period outside the limits of Christendom, any clear evidence of a spontaneous and continuous moral development? It is the testimony of M. Renouf that "the sublimer portions of the Egyptian religion are not the comparatively late result of a process of development. The sublimer portions are demonstrably ancient, and the last stage of the Egyptian religion was by far the grossest and most corrupt." In like manner the process of Egyptian civilization is one of continually deepening degradation, moral, social, and political.

We obtain the same result if we inquire respecting the progress of that civilization, equally ancient, which had its origin in Chaldea. Never a very elevated form either of thought or worship, it gradually declined, till in every one of its offshoots, whether Assyrian, Phrygian, Phœnician, or Carthaginian, it faded away into degrading sensuality and national death. Confucius partly adopted from an almost immemorial past, partly himself created, a very lofty system of ethics in China. And that system has retained its hold

on the Chinese people, in spite of the Buddhistic invasion. "The national conscience of that country," says Edkins, "is much more Confucian than Buddhistic." "But what," asks the same author, "has been the result on the Chinese of the Confucian morality?" And he replies, "It has not made them a moral people." Where, then, is the evidence of progress in that immense and ancient empire? The Chinaman remains what he has been for thousands of years, a patient labourer, an utter materialist, the backward product of a stagnant civilization.

What, again, has been the history of Aryan civilization in India? Beginning with the comparatively pure nature-worship of the Vedas, and the vigorous life of the early Aryan conquerors, it has ended in the superstitious puerility and national feebleness with which we have been made familiar in our Hindoo subjects. No better has it fared with the Buddhist reform of the ancient Brahminism. What a descent from the metaphysical power and ethical beauty of Gautama's original teaching to the useless asceticism, the base superstitions and praying-machines of modern Buddhists!

Greece and Rome, again, presented in their earlier years a popular life, pure, pious, and strong, including the germs in the one of grand developments of thought and art, in the other of law and government. But how did they end? In a life so unutterably foul that we cannot pollute our lips by describing it, and in a popular degeneracy so hopeless that nothing could save it from destruction.

Is it otherwise with the history of that ancient civilization of the western world, which seems to Professor Réville to be as great a discovery for modern scholars as if they had been able to migrate into a neighbouring planet? It was so ancient that when the Spaniards arrived in America, the

natives themselves had lost all memory of the ancient cities and noble monuments which the Europeans rescued from oblivion. Even in decay, however, this civilization was imposing. It had fine roads, irrigation canals, a careful system of agriculture, and splendid cities, which had their streets cleansed by day and lighted by night, "advantages in which none of the European capitals rejoiced in the sixteenth century." And yet, what had been the effect of this civilization upon the moral condition of the people? When the Spanish conquerors landed, the natives of the country remembered a succession of three empires, and in each case it was the more polished people, who, enervated by their civilization, had been vanquished and ruined by more savage tribes from the north. Progress there was none. When civilization reached a certain stage, it produced in each successive conquering race enervation and decay.

Where, then, on all the earth, in all the known history of man, can you find signs of continuous progress, except in Christendom? Will it be urged, perhaps, that even in this state of the case we have no right to ascribe the progressiveness of Christendom to its Christianity, knowing, as we do, that Christendom has appropriated the thought and art of Greece, the law and organization of Rome? I answer that Christendom is not the only part of humanity which made that appropriation. Mohammedanism was born six hundred years after Christianity. It rapidly appropriated all the results of Greek and Roman civilization, whether in their Pagan or Christian form. "When Europe," says Dr. Draper, "was hardly more enlightened than Caffraria is now, the Saracens were cultivating and even creating science." They not only possessed the wisdom of Greece and Rome, but as Dr. Draper has brilliantly shown, were in some directions advancing far beyond it. If, then, it is the inheritance of

classical culture which has largely contributed to the progressive civilization of Christendom, how is it that it had no such effect on the Saracens?

How is it that with all this treasure of ancient lore, and vigour of indigenous thought, the moral and spiritual life of the Moslems sank into the torpor of arrested development? Their history only affords another and a conclusive proof that human nature does not contain in itself any sufficient stock of progressive energy, that in the domain of moral freedom, if we leave out of account that part of it in which it is alleged that the soul of man has been reinforced by the spirit of Christ, the law of progressive development has not prevailed.

Now, how is this? How is it that out of the sphere of Christ's influence salvation has not come to men through the works of any law? How is it that the history of the whole human family affords one vast body of evidence of the truth of St. Paul's negative affirmation? Some, perhaps, may still attribute this result to a defective ideal aim. Admitting that the Christian religion is the progressive element in Christendom, they may still urge that it is progressive because of the character of its ideal. They may point to what is unquestionably a fact, that until the foundation of the Christian Church there was no system which at once set up the will to love as the highest good for man, and at the same time sought to impart that good to every one. What, for instance, can be loftier than the moral ideal of the great masters of Greek thought? It may, indeed, be too narrow in the range of its duties, "temperance and fortitude," as a great critic has pointed out, "having to do duty between them for the whole of what we understand by self-denial." But this was by no means its most serious defect. Not with the range of duties which

it prescribed, but rather with the range of the subjects of those duties, have we most reason to be dissatisfied.

"In Aristotle's view," says Professor Green, "the βίος πρακτικὸς, the life of rational, self-determined activity, was only possible for a few among the few," for the free citizens of a Greek state. Barbarians, slaves, and women, that is, more than nine-tenths of the human race, he regarded as simply beneath the reach of the practical life. Most of them were mere chattels and instruments of the rest. And hence an immense restriction both in the area of practical duties and the range of faculties called into play for their realization. There was no room in such a system for the feeling of universal sympathy and brotherhood, or for those vast and far-reaching efforts which become necessary when every human creature is regarded as a person, capable of reaching the will to good, and possessing claims for help on all others. When such a duty is realized, conscience becomes uneasy at its violation, as it would not have been in a Greek, who used his slave as his chattel, and thought of the members of other states as enemies whom it was his right to hate and spoil and destroy.

Why do we feel nervous now, why does our conscience experience a sense of discomfort, when we see aboriginal races perishing in the lands which we have occupied? Because our Christian belief, however imperfect it may be, has taught us that each of these has his rights, and we fear that we may have contributed to the extinction of such races by ignoring those rights. Now, it was just this great question, whether every man has all the rights of his nature as man, whether man is more than Jew, and spirit more than circumcision, which was distinctly raised for the first time in that great controversy, of which we feel the echoes and shakings in the hot broken words of the Epistle to the

Galatians. No doubt the same question had been already raised, and virtually decided, in our Lord's teaching of the Universal Fatherhood of God. It was not enough, however, to state such a question implicitly. Before it could be finally settled, before those tribal and national prejudices could be broken down, which had been growing and hardening for thousands of years, exclusive claims must be drawn forth into clear expression and negatived by name.

Now, the question was clearly raised in the Galatian Church, Is it possible for man, as man, to partake of the salvation of Christ? Is his humanity a sufficient qualification; or must man become a Jew before he can become a Christian? No man could have been fitter than St. Paul, by nature, training, and personal experience, for dealing with this immense question. He had been a personal possessor of each of the exclusive privileges in which a Jew of that generation could pride himself. He was a Roman citizen, he was a member of the chosen people, he had belonged to the most exclusive sect of his religion, and even within the limits of that sect he had been distinguished for rancorous exclusiveness. He knew the full meaning of all which his enemies claimed; he had tried their method of rigorous privilege and proud self-sufficiency to the uttermost, and it had broken down. There was no truth in it. There was no help in it. He had had to abandon all that to find truth and help in Christ. Every man needed what he had needed. Every man could be saved as he had been saved, not by merit, but by grace; not by works of a law, but by faith in Christ; not by the suggestions of a scheme of thought, but by the help of an Almighty Spirit. And because this salvation was designed for every man, and sufficient for every man, therefore the Apostle proclaimed, in words which must have shaken that proud,

cruel, jealous, masterful world from end to end: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female," every clause, you see, striking at a throned and time-established lie, "for ye are all one in Christ Jesus."

Now, I have no doubt that by thus enlarging the range of moral duties and rights, of religious privileges and opportunities, St. Paul contributed no little to that change of will in individuals upon which, as we have seen, human improvement depends. But if you had asked him whether he thought the development of a better ideal sufficient of itself to effect this change, he would have met you at once with an emphatic denial. "*Velle non discitur*" he would have said in effect. No law, no plan, no system of thought, no theoretic scheme of any kind, can make man good. It can show him what he should be, but it can never make him such. And if you had further asked him why, he would have replied with his doctrine of the weakness and insufficiency of the human will. He was not himself dissatisfied with the law. For its own purposes the law was "holy and just and good." The misery was that he who knew and admired it was not able to keep it. It was weak, not in itself, but "through the flesh."

He found within himself two tendencies. The one he called "the flesh," which lusted to evil; the other he called "the mind," which desired to obey the law of God and was not able. It would be useless to attempt to fix any exact meaning upon such terms as "flesh" and "mind" in this connexion. St. Paul was no dry logician. He grasped at the first words which would most vividly picture his thought; and half the follies of dogmatism have arisen from failing to recognise that fact. St. Paul wished to name those selfish tendencies within him which, impatient of restraint, hurried

him into transgression, and he took the word "flesh," that which described the outward part of his nature, the seat of lusts and passions, as fittest. He wished again to describe those higher impulses of love to God and man which found themselves formulated in God's law, and so delighted in it; and to these impulses he gave the name "mind," as describing that in his nature which was inward and highest.

Now, of these two active tendencies so named, St. Paul declares that the lower is naturally the stronger. The will to live is stronger than the will to love. Thus he cannot do the things he would. He is driven to do the things he hates. How can any law help him in such a strait? What is the use of issuing commands to a man who cannot do what he desires? What he needs is spiritual force to add power to his will; to make the will to love triumph over the will to live.

"But how can such help be possibly given?" cries the naturalistic philosopher. Such a change, going down to the very roots of being, reversing the direction of will, that is nothing less than a re-making of the man. "True, most true," the Apostle would have replied. "This is what it is, and nothing less than this is necessary. The old man must die, and a new man must be born within. The first Adam, the nature which we brought into the world with us, must be transformed by the energy of that second Adam, who is a quickening spirit." That is why we need a risen and glorified Saviour. We need Him here and now, this day and all days. We need Him as a present power, as a continuously in-dwelling and quickening presence. The memory and the words of the Divine Teacher of Galilee are not enough for us. We need a living Christ, a present Christ, an almighty Christ, to reinforce our will and raise us day by day from the death of sin to the life of righteousness.

"Therefore," cries St. Paul, "though we have known Christ after the flesh, now henceforth know we Him no more." The Christ whom we know is the Christ in the heart, whose spirit is ours, whose will is ours, whose work is ours, whose Father is ours. Is any man then tormented and cast down by the lusts of the flesh, is any man groaning beneath the condemnation of the law, and of his own conscience, to him I say, "Walk in the spirit, and you shall not fulfil the lusts of the flesh;" believe on the risen and glorified Redeemer, "for they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts." Here is the centre and main content of the Gospel according to St. Paul.

Before, however, proceeding to expound it more fully, and to trace its more important consequences, it will be necessary in my next lecture to consider one more, and the last possible, attempt, to cure the evils of a weak and perverse will without faith in Christ.

IV.

We saw in the last lecture that if men are to be made better and happier, this must be effected by some change of will. No law, no ideal, no mere scheme of life, how excellent soever, can make men good. It can only show them what they ought to be. Doubtless this is something, and may be much. It may excite admiration. It may stimulate effort. But it cannot, on the large scale, insure success to such effort. It has not done so in the past outside of Christendom, and only to a limited extent inside of it.

What then is the cause of this failure? St. Paul tells us that it arises from defect of power in our higher nature to overcome the selfish impulses of our lower nature. And he adds that if our higher nature is ever to secure the victory, this can only be accomplished by the help of the Spirit of Christ. So far we had come in our last lecture, and it might now seem to be time to go on to consider more largely this central position of the Apostle, with its principal consequences. At this point, however, we are stopped by the claims of what I may call the philosophy of unconscious will, to solve the problem before us in a different way. And before we can feel secure in following the Apostle, we must at least hear what is to be said on behalf of this new solution. Strange to say, it is substantially a revival of that of Gautama the Buddha, as, indeed, Schopenhauer, its modern originator, has confessed.

He says that all attempts to convert the Brahmans and Buddhists to Christianity are of about as much use "as if we fired a bullet at a cliff."

"The ancient wisdom of the human race," he goes on, "will not be displaced by what happened in Galilee. On the contrary, Indian philosophy streams back to Europe, and will produce a fundamental change in our knowledge and thought." In like manner, Professor Réville, in his classification of religions, brings Buddhism and Christianity (though with a very different estimate of their relative merits) into the same category. Of religions there are, he thinks, five classes, (1) the simple worship of natural objects; (2) the animist and fetichist religions; (3) the great national mythologies founded on the dramatization of nature; (4) the legalistic religions; (5) the religions of redemption or deliverance. In the last category he puts Christianity and Buddhism by themselves. In doing so he does not mean to affirm that there are no elements of deliverance in other religions, but only that in these two, Christianity and Buddhism, the aim at deliverance, whether from sin or misery, is the determining principle of the faith.

Now, amongst all the writers in the New Testament, no one brings out this distinguishing element of Christianity so sharply, definitely, and largely as St. Paul. You will see therefore that there is a special reason for comparing his account of the deliverance of man with that given by Buddhism and Buddhistic philosophy. Ordinarily, no doubt, it would be necessary to consider the religion, and the philosophies founded on it, apart. For religion is something more than philosophy. Its most general definition, derived simply from a consideration of what is common to all religions properly so called, is that of Pro-

fessor Réville. "Religion," he says, "is the determination of human life by the sentiment of a bond uniting the human mind to that mysterious mind whose domination of itself and of the world it recognises, and to whom it delights in feeling itself united." Of this "feeling of a bond," he says most truly, it is not that merely of a theoretic relation, but of a bond as positive and as real "as, for instance, the force of gravitation which detains us on the surface of the earth." Man feels it as soon as he begins to think about the world which surrounds him.

Religion is, in fact, in its most general conception, no other than the instinctive recognition of what lies essentially in man's perception of the universe. When he first knows it, there lie latently in his inward picture of it the conceptions of the infinite, of the orderly, of the wise and the beneficent; only at first these conceptions are largely implicit. He has not separated them from his other thoughts and feelings, and looked at them in abstraction; nor can he make this separation purely at a bound, but only by degrees through a succession of very imperfect detachments. Because, however, these conceptions are really present in his mind, wrapped up in the uncoiled multiple of his thoughts, man has an instinctive impression of their existence, and the feelings aroused by this impression are a prophetic projection of thoughts which will become more and more explicit as life rises in culture. Listening, then, to the whisperings of this instinct, man becomes conscious that there is face to face with his spirit another spirit manifested in the world around him, with which he desires to enter into communion. This desire is excited, not merely by the hope of gain or safety, but much more by the wish to enlarge and elevate his own low and narrow life.

Hence the exquisite charm of religion. It enlarges all

horizons; intensifies all emotions; stimulates imagination; and opens the way into worlds of hope and love, which are boundless and wonderful. All this, however, is conditional on the assumption that the Being with whom we seek union is a Mind. As Réville puts it, "The man who feels, thinks, and desires, will always know himself to be superior to that which has neither thought, nor feeling, nor will." From the moment in which the savage discovers that his fetich is not a person but a thing, he ceases to adore it. And from that first instant in which the philosopher discovers that the worlds are unconscious, he will cry with Pascal, "I am greater than the Universe, for even if the Universe kills me, I know what it does, while of the advantage which it has over me the Universe knows nothing."

Such is religion conceived of with the utmost generality. How, then, does it differ from philosophy? They have this in common, that they both arise naturally from the impulse in the human mind to seek the supreme ground and unity of all things. But the paths which they pursue in their common quest are different. Philosophy proceeds by the path of systematic thought; religion, as I have pointed out, by that of instinctive feeling. Philosophy may possibly get upon a false track; then, as it proceeds by strictly logical methods, all will be tainted by the original error, and this error will only become the more considerable as speculation expands and advances. Religion, on the other hand, though by no means exempt from mistakes, is far less liable to fundamental fallacies. The intuitions by which its feelings are excited are eternally true, because imposed by the very constitution of man. And hence, what religion lacks in sufficiency of form it makes up by certainty of intuition.

Philosophies arise and sweep all before them for a time,

demanding even that religion shall only exist as their expression; then suddenly they are seen to be unreliable, and crash down into ruin. But the religion which they sought to subjugate lives on. It was not really committed to any logically connected exposition of the intuitions on which it rests, and was thus but little disturbed by philosophical revolutions.

It may appear at first sight, then, to be rather unfair to take any philosophy as an adequate representation of a religion of deliverance, like Buddhism. But the fact is that, in the true sense of the word, Buddhism is not a religion at all. In its original form it had no God. No doubt in later times its disciples, impelled by the craving for some satisfaction of the religious instinct, made a god of their founder, and even appropriated religious elements of a most unworthy kind from the low polytheisms around them. The Buddhism of Gautama, however, the original Buddhism, has no god at all, and thus, according to our definition, is no religion at all, but simply a philosophy. In its original form it has all the disadvantages of Oriental obscurity, and thus to represent it by carefully reasoned Western systems, based on the highest form of Western philosophy, that of Kant, is to do it more than justice; and, moreover, to make it as nearly comprehensible as so obscure a philosophy can be made.

Furthermore, the systems of Schopenhauer and Von Hartmann deserve to be studied on account of their own position in modern thought. They are philosophies, not merely of being and knowing, but especially of redemption. It may be that this their declared aim has something to do with the popularity of the later of them in an age which is interested, above all things, in the delivery of the masses of mankind from evil and misery. Von Hartmann's principal

treatise has gained in Germany a popularity which, for a philosophical work, is simply astonishing. It has run through no fewer than nine editions, having been apparently read not only by the small class which is interested in philosophical questions, but by all sorts and conditions of men. Owing, I have little doubt, to this circumstance, Schopenhauer, in spite of his repellent character and misanthropical principles, has become at length a great name in Germany. A committee even has been formed to raise a statue to his memory, which embraces the names not only of eminent Germans, but also of Americans, Indians, and Frenchmen, including persons so well known as Ernest Rénan, Max Müller, and Emile de Laveleye.

What, then, let us ask, is the method of human redemption proposed by these popular and famous modern philosophies? Schopenhauer's gospel is based upon a peculiar theory of being. He asks, like all other philosophers, what is the reality which shows itself in all those appearances in consciousness, which make up the sum of our knowledge? And he answers, it is, not matter, not force, but *will*. "The concept of will," he says, "has hitherto been subordinated to that of force, but I reverse the matter entirely, and desire that every force in nature shall be thought as will." His reason for this demand is not without its cogency. The conception of force, he argues, is ultimately derived from that of will. We run up the long line of causation till we come to a point where we can find no further antecedent, and we say that the last link in this chain, the cause of all causes, is force.

But why do we talk about force? How do we gain the conception of force? Simply from the experience which we have of the effort of our own will. "The effort," says Bishop Temple, "which is necessary when we choose to do

what we have barely strength to do, impresses on us the sense of a force residing in ourselves, and capable of overcoming resistance." When, therefore, we find without us that which seems in like manner to have the power of overcoming resistance, we transfer to it the conception of that which we first experienced within, and say that it is a force, or the seat of force. But now, asks Schopenhauer, why do we substitute the less known for the better known? Force, as we know it, is will. Why then give it the name force, the name of an uncertain inference, simply because it shows itself without us? It is a will within, and why not therefore without? Strange to say, the course of physical speculation seems to be leading thoughtful men more and more in the direction of this conclusion. For some little time scientists were content to rest in the assumption that what are called atoms are simply vortex-rings of æther.

Now, however, the suggestion of Boscovich, that atoms are nothing but atomic centres of force, seems to be meeting with increased acceptance. Professor Clifford says, for instance: "We know with great probability that wherever there is an atom there is a small electric current. Very many of the properties of atoms are explained by this; and we have vague hopes that they all will be. If so, we shall say that an atom is a small current." But a small current of what? we ask. And already Wallace has made answer, "We have traced one force to an origin in our own will, while we have no knowledge of any other primary cause of force. It does not seem therefore an impossible conclusion that all force may be will-force, and that the whole universe is not merely dependent upon, but actually is the will of higher intelligences, or of one Supreme Intelligence."

But now, Schopenhauer, basing himself chiefly on the phenomena of unconscious cerebration, goes a step farther, and declares this will, which is everything, to be unconscious, a mere blind impulse to live. Von Hartmann has stated this view (in which he agrees with Schopenhauer) so clearly that I will quote his account of it. "That piece of matter yonder," says he, "is a conglomerate of atomic forces, viz., of fiats of the unconscious to attract from this point of space with this intensity, to repel from that point with that intensity. Let the unconscious intermit these acts of will, at the same moment that piece of matter has ceased to exist; let the unconscious will anew, and the matter is there again. Here the prodigy of the creation of the material world is lost in the marvel of its every-day preservation each moment, which is a continuous creation."

But, now, what is the consequence of assuming that the will which stands behind and constitutes all existence is nothing more than a blind will to live? That the world is and must be full of misery. For this will which is all, takes counsel of nothing but its own selfish impulse towards realization. Does this realization involve to all conscious creatures a perpetual striving which never reaches its goal, and heats of passion succeeded by disgusts of disappointment or *ennui?* All this is matter of no concern to the unconscious. Its one purpose is to pass into concrete being, and if in reaching its end it turns the universe into a shambles, and all consciousness into one deep protracted pain, all that is nothing. Live it will. And to gain its object it will so blind all creatures with the illusion of pleasure, that they shall become voluntary agents of its purpose; as ready to suffer for it, in the insensate rage of passion or acquisition, as the demented fanatics of India are to throw their writhing bodies beneath the car of their idol.

What then in these circumstances is the object of philosophy? To discover the illusion; to detect the Almighty selfishness at its unhallowed merciless work, and so to point out some means of escape from its cruelty. But what means of escape are possible to us, it may be asked, when we ourselves are only a form and objectivation of this same blind impulse? Schopenhauer's way of escape is the same as that of Gautama, a mystic asceticism possible only to the few.

A man must endeavour to rise into the world of Platonic ideas; so to identify himself with the objects of thought that he drops all self and all willing out of the process. If the slightest scintilla of willing should intrude into this life of pure contemplation, the thinker must hasten to sink his "self" again in the object of perception. He must flee from will into idea. But what, we ask, if his very life, if his very self consists in unconscious willing, how is he to give up willing and yet live? Ah! replies Schopenhauer, blessed is that man who has so banished will as to live no more. That is Nirvana; that is Paradise. Every effort must be made to attain that end. Hence the value of asceticism, for by the refusal of what is agreeable, and by the selection of what is disagreeable, man breaks the will and predisposes himself to give up willing.

Mystic contemplation, however, is the better way, for so a man may first pass into a state of ecstasy in which he thinks without willing, and ultimately may reach the pessimistic heaven, where every manifestation of will is abolished, even its most fundamental manifestations, "time and space, subject and object," and there remains "no will, no idea, no word . . . only nothingness."

Schopenhauer began, as we saw, with an assumption which is contradicted by our religious consciousness, that

the mind manifested in the world is without freedom and without thought, that it is in fact no mind at all, but a mere blind impulse to live, which, unconscious of itself, and bound by the iron fetters of necessity, has neither mind nor heart, neither wisdom nor benevolence. What right had he, then, to give to this mere machine-like impulse the high name of will? Will we know, and, as we know it, it is a determination free to choose the form of its own realization, and never choosing it till it has taken counsel of intelligence.

Now it is of such a will as this that we discern the signs in the world without us. It is with such a will as this that we have the instinctive desire to enter into union. Tell us that the will of the world is only a blind impulse, and we shall despise it and refuse to believe in it, and most of all to believe that in its blind, headlong course it managed to develop itself into us, free wills, capable of love, and guided by conscious intelligence. Is it wonderful then, that, beginning as Schopenhauer did, he ended as he did? Who could have any feeling towards his unconscious selfishness but one of repugnance? who could entertain any more hope of life, if life were nothing but the rush of this blind impulse? Then certainly the only escape from the will to live would be in the will to die, and in the will (on Schopenhauer's system an impotent one) to bring everything else to death.

Von Hartmann, adopting Schopenhauer's system with additions of his own, imagines that he has found a way to make this gospel of death finally and universally efficacious. He is dissatisfied with Schopenhauer's account of that real which is the basis of phenomena. A blind impulse, he urges, starting from no beginning, and tending to no end, is a mere empty form without contents. "No one," he urges, "can merely will without willing this or that: a will

which does not will something is not. No volition, as Aristotle said long ago, without object." Schopenhauer even without noticing it, gives an object to his blind impulse by calling it a will to live. Its object is to realize itself in concrete forms of existence. Accordingly, Von Hartmann sets beside the unconscious will of Schopenhauer, "as metaphysical principle of equal value," the unconscious "idea of Schelling." The All thinks, but it thinks unconsciously, without either knowing itself or what it is thinking about. In support of this strange hypothesis he marshals an immense array of biological facts (the only really interesting part of his work) to show that there is thought in nature of an unconscious kind. What his instances actually prove, however, is something a long way short of this. He shows that many of the actions of the lowest organisms betray the existence of a rational purpose. It is certain, however, from the extremely rudimentary organization of these creatures, that such a purpose has never been conceived by them. If not, then it must have been formed for them, by something outside of them; by a real ground of their being which is either conscious or unconscious of what it purposes. The real question is, which of these alternatives shall we take? Shall we say that the purpose-forming Ground of Being is conscious or unconscious of its own thought? As by hypothesis the real ground is unknowable, we can decide this question in no other way than by a reference to the analogy of our own experience. Do we know then of any such thing as thought without a conscious thinker? Can we conceive of any such thing? If not, then the assumption of thought and purpose in a real Being who is unconscious of their very existence is purely arbitrary, and appears to me at least to be utterly irrational. Von Hartmann's theory, therefore, must be

pronounced to rest partly on arbitrary hypothesis and partly upon inconclusive reasoning. But such as it is, it is absolutely necessary to that which alone directly concerns us, his scheme for delivering the human race from that pain and misery which result necessarily from his theory of the nature of the universe.

His conception of the process of deliverance is as follows: In the infinite ages of the past the unconscious will to live drove on blindly and peacefully under the guidance of an unconscious intelligence of whose very existence it was unaware. At last, however, it blundered into the realization of organic existences which could feel pain from this everlasting striving to live. Now, what was to be done? How could this impetuous mistake of the will to live be rectified? Blindly thinking, the unconscious All was found equal to the emergency. It realized itself in beings so constituted that sensational impressions were followed by ideal reactions other than those involved in the will to live. In the unconscious, nothing could be thought but what was willed. But here, in these new beings which had broken in, ideas could be seen and held together which were not willed, which were only seen, and then sent back into the ideal world without realization.

Idea thus became separated from will, and could be held in the mind apart from will. Seeing this for the first time, the unconscious will felt itself face to face with a new power, and from its amazement at this discovery consciousness resulted. Thus, cries Von Hartmann in an ecstasy, "the great revolution had come to pass; the first step in the world's redemption had been taken." Now beings existed in the world who were capable of seeing through the illusion of life. They could discover that willing meant misery, and that the only way to escape from misery was to cease willing.

This, however, was but little so long as the impulse was only to individual deliverance. To see salvation in such deliverance was Schopenhauer's mistake. What was the use of individual emancipation from the will to live, so long as the infinite unconscious went on willing as usual? In the place of the individual who had willed himself out of life, the unconscious will of the universe brought a thousand others into life, who did but repeat the old experience of misery. Nay, what deliverance were it if even the whole human race, individual by individual, willed itself out of existence? The unconscious would only will into existence other races of sentient beings to repeat the wretchedness of those who had gone. Plainly, in order to get rid of misery and bring back peace to the universe, it is necessary in some way to will the unconscious All itself out of existence.

But how could this be done? How can the unconscious will, separated into conscious individuals, destroy itself in them and the whole cosmos? Even this does not seem impossible to Von Hartmann. Idea has been separated from the will to live in conscious individuals. This idea can persist in independence. It can even become the master of the will to live. Seeing thoroughly through the illusion of life, and comprehending clearly that all willing whatever must end in unblessedness, it seizes upon its own share of willing to turn it into a weapon against the universal will. It may be difficult to conceive how a will which is in its very essence a will to live can be changed by the stress of an idea into its opposite; but even this Von Hartmann thinks he can imagine, and thence comes his hope of a radical and final deliverance from misery.

The day may come, he thinks, when the major part of the whole willing which constitutes the universe may be

concentrated in humanity. Improvements in agriculture and the arts of life may increase the number of the living members of the human race indefinitely. If so, we shall have a will force upon the earth which, considering its quality, its possible intensity of effort, may be preponderant over that other portion of it which is manifested in stars and insentient or unconscious existences. Of the stars only a small portion, he thinks, have advanced to the stage in which they could support sentient life; and even of that small portion there seems no probability that any could support sentient life of a high order. If, then, the energy of will required to keep the worlds and their contents in being be of so low an order that it is not to be compared for efficacy to that which is concentrated in the human race, what is to prevent mankind from willing the whole out of existence if only all be brought to combine in the effort?

And why should not all be brought some day into such a combination? Great thinkers, when they have become profoundly penetrated by the conviction that the only way to stop misery is to stop willing, will gradually impart their conviction to others. Nay, it seems to Von Hartmann that this conviction is already settling down into the hearts of the hapless millions of mankind, through the sense of their own misery. People are coming to hate life because of its wretchedness. A pessimistic melancholy is stealing over the heart of the world. The race is growing old; and as it grows older there is a palpable diminution in it "of the energy of feeling and passion," outcome of the will to live. Those, then, who have the power are gradually acquiring the will to use it.

Again, as a third condition of deliverance, we find that the communication of the members of the human race with one another is being facilitated by better means of loco-

motion. Thought and feeling are becoming cosmopolitan. A strong conviction of the vanity of life established in one part of the world, may be expected therefore to communicate itself rapidly to all the rest. And thus there appears to be a possibility that at some future time "the greater part of the spirit active in the universe may form the resolve to give up willing." And then what will happen? "Consciousness," says Von Hartmann, "will then suffice to hurl back the total actual volition into nothingness, by which the process and the world ceases; and ceases, indeed, without leaving any residuum whatever, whereby the process might be continued."

This is salvation with a vengeance. The universe is saved from misery by being reduced to nothing! The human race is one day to exhibit its might, as a god greater than Buddha, by willing God, the world, and itself into annihilation. Like Samson, the human race, condemned to grind for ages, blind and bound, in the mill of a wretched existence, rises in its might at length, and seizing in its awful grasp the vast pillars of the universe, buries itself and its oppressors in a common ruin.

One may suspect indeed the pessimist speculator of the future to give this alleged myth of Samson quite a new turn. Samson is human nature, with its strong animal passions and its grand intuitions of the ideal. A Nazarite from its childhood, dedicated by the unconscious idea to the service of deliverance, and showing from time to time its fitness to achieve it, it forgets at length its vocation in passionate indulgence of the will to live. Israel may be enslaved, the universe may be in misery, but what is that to it so long as it can dally with its Delilah-like lusts and passions?

At length, however, misfortune crushes it. It begins to

lose its pleasure in the senses. Its strength goes from it. It becomes the maimed and blinded slave of its passions. This opens its eyes. It begins to yearn after redemption, and to devote itself inwardly to that talk of universal deliverance which it has too long neglected. Then in the prison-house of its pessimism it gains new strength. Its hair begins to grow; its purpose becomes clearer; and even while the passions are revelling in their triumph, it seizes the pillars of life, bows the mighty muscles of its volition, and buries the universe in ruins.

Such is the paradise of pessimism; such is the Nirvana of our western Buddhists; such the aim and hoped-for goal of the only religion which, in common with Christianity, can be called a religion of deliverance. Its gospel may be expressed in one short sentence, Man is to be delivered from the will to live by gaining the will to die. Now can we state as shortly the gospel of the only other religion of deliverance? We can. Man is to be delivered from the will to live by gaining the will to love. Now, what causes this enormous difference between the two faiths? The difference, I answer, of their points of departure. The Lord Jesus teaches us that the will behind all phenomena is no mere blind impulse to live, directed by a thought, if it have any thought, of which it is itself unconscious; but a will to love, sustained by Infinite Power, and guided by Infinite Wisdom, that its image and reflection are to be sought not in what is lowest in human life, but in what is highest, in the freedom of man's will, in the consciousness of his thought, in the light of his conscience, in the unselfishness of his love.

The Infinite Spirit is our Heavenly Father, who loves us and cares for us, and it is to be the one aim and purpose of our life to become "perfect, as our Father which is in

heaven is perfect." Still, it must be acknowledged that there is a dark shadow over man's life. God made him free that he might become virtuous. But he used his freedom to his own undoing. He has chosen to realize the selfish will to live, instead of the heavenly will to love. Observe, it is this lower nature of man which our modern Buddhists have seen as reality behind all phenomena. And therefore their terrible pictures of what life must be, on their own assumption, are actually true of those who yield themselves to the impulse of their lower nature.

"If a man seeks," says Schopenhauer, "with burning eagerness to accumulate everything to slake the thirst of his egoism," and thus experiences, as he inevitably must, "that any finite appeasing of this fierce pressure of will is impossible," the end must be "a sense of terrible desolation and emptiness, an eternal unrest, an incurable pain." This pain then, in the worst of men, seeks to relieve itself "by the sight of the suffering of others." At this stage the will to enjoy passes over into one of pure malevolence, into those monstrous forms of humanity which are presented in the Neros and Domitians of history, demons incarnate, who live in all the torments of an earthly hell. This is the gulf of misery which ever yawns in front of those who give themselves up to the impulse of man's lower nature, of the selfish will to live.

Now, this lower nature exists in every man, and is ever striving to overcome the will to love, that image of the Heavenly Father in which man was created. The struggle between these two natures, the lower and the higher, is the actual process of the spiritual life of every man. When the will to live preponderates the man becomes bad; when it triumphs, and utterly quenches the will to love, the man becomes a fiend, like Nero. When, on the other hand,

the will to love preponderates, the man is good; when it triumphs, and quells the will to live, the man becomes a saint, like St. Paul.

The question, then, of prime importance in human life is this, How can the will to love be made to subdue within us the will to live: how can the will of the Gospel suppress the will of Pessimism? It is with that question that the gospel according to St. Paul is mainly concerned, and it is its answer to that question which furnishes its glad tidings. No law can give the victory to the will to love. Law does but declare that it ought to prevail. No mere unassisted effort of man can secure that victory, because the will to live is too powerful within us.

How, then, is our weak will to love to be so reinforced that it can attain final and decisive ascendency? It can only get the help it needs in Christ. Our Heavenly Father, pitying our weakness and seeking our salvation, sent His only-begotten Son to fight for us the battle of the two wills.

Christ being true man had in His humanity in germ and potency the will to live as well as the will to love. The will to live in Him could be tempted to selfish excess. It was so tempted. But His own inherent will to love rose in its might and overcame the temptation. Never for an instant was the will to live allowed by Him to become selfish.

Still, the battle was hard and long. He was assailed by seduction, by applause, by misunderstanding, by hate and opposition, by pain, torture, and death; but through all the will to love, to love even those who hated and slew Him, obtained a perfect victory. He spent and gave his life to save men, even the worst, from the selfish desolating will to live. And then, says St. Paul, having won the victory, He passed into the unseen world that thence He might

send forth His Spirit into the hearts of all who believed on Him.

Weak, then, as we are by nature, "we can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth us." We needed not a dead law to command and condemn, but a heavenly force to enter our hearts, which, without abolishing our will, should reinforce it and give it energy to love. Christ supplies that need. He gives us more than a command which we could not obey, more than an example which we could not imitate. He gives us will-force, the aid of His own Divine Spirit to dwell in us and renew us unto holiness. "The flesh may still lust against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh;" but "if we be led by the spirit we are not under the law."

Conflict there will still be, failure there will still be; many an error, many a fall, many an hour of heart-ache and bitter repentance; but to those who cling to Christ and pray for the aid of His Spirit, strength shall never be wanting, nor the sense of pardon, nor the calm of inward peace. And when at last the end comes, instead of longing to escape from the misery of willing into the silence and darkness of death, the faithful Christian shall be able to say with St. Paul, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness;" the will to live in me has been changed wholly, not into the will to die, but into that will to love which is the will of Him "who loved me and gave Himself for me."

V.

We have seen that there is spiritual discord in man, a conflict between two wills, the will to live and the will to love. Man's salvation, his deliverance from internal discord and misery, depends on his ability to make the will to love in him triumph over the will to live. How, then, is this end to be achieved? Can it be secured by law? No; law can only point to what should be done, can never secure that it shall be done. Can unassisted effort then? No; the will to live in each individual too far preponderates over the will to love. What, then, in this emergency is to be done? How can man be saved, not merely from the consequences of his sin, that were little, but from sin itself? St. Paul tells us that the possibility of this deliverance has been established by the creation in human life of a new religious synthesis, of a union new, but most real and inward, between the soul and its glorified Saviour.

The mere announcement of such a fact as this, not merely supernatural, but super-intelligible, is often met by an incredulous shrug of the shoulders, or by the remark that we have got beyond all that, and that in these days we only believe what we can see or understand. That sounds very wise, but, as all real thinkers know, is in truth very shallow, the fact being that we can understand through and through no single least thing in all our experience and thought.

Some of the profoundest words which have been uttered

in this generation have been cast by the Poet Laureate into the quaint and crabbed form of a poem of some dozen lines. There is not charm enough in their form to stamp them upon the memory, but they are to the effect, that if we could understand all about the little flower growing in the wall-cranny, we should understand God and man, and all things. To understand any one thing to the very bottom is to understand everything.

I daresay many of you will remember Plato's beautiful representation of the nature of human knowledge. He supposes a number of men in a cave, tied to chairs, with their faces to the cave wall in such a manner that they cannot turn their heads. Behind them is lighted a fire, and between them and the fire a number of people pass, whose shadows are thrown on the wall of the cave. The tied men can see the shadows, but they cannot turn their heads and see the real persons who cast those shadows.

So is it with our knowledge. Our spirit sees the shadows of realities cast on the cave wall of consciousness, but it cannot turn its head and see the realities themselves. To know all about the little flower in the wall-cranny would be to turn our heads and see reality; an apocalypse far more wonderful than has ever yet been shown to man. Let this be recognised at once, then, that no man completely understands anything. No man can turn his head and look at reality. And yet, for all that, our minds are so constituted that we cannot help believing in reality, and, moreover, that there is a possibility of union between the reality which we name ourselves, and that which reveals itself in nature. Call this latter reality what you will, matter, or force, or will, it cannot produce changes in us through the changes in our body. These outward or bodily changes we can, in a way, understand. They are all ultimately reducible to

molecular vibrations of the nerves. Let the impulse from the outward reality approach us through what sense soever it may, whether through eye, or ear, or touch, it ends by producing molecular vibrations in the brain.

That is the last fact of which physiology can tell us. But how we are able to turn these various simple vibrations, now into our sensation of sound, and now into the totally distinct sensation of light or heat, no one can tell us. We do it; but how, nobody can divine. But do we, therefore, disbelieve that the thing is done? Does our defect of understanding disturb for one moment our belief that the reality without, be it what it may, has entered into a real and mutual relation with the reality within, be that what it may? Not for one moment. Let us, then, apply this illustration to the case of religion.

What did we find in our last lecture was the latest and most general definition of religion, according to Professor Reville? It ran thus: "Religion is the determination of human life by the sentiment of a bond uniting the human mind with that mysterious mind whose domination of itself and of the world it recognises." Now, what is there in this conclusion which goes beyond that which I have just reached, and which every thoughtful man admits? The name "mind" has been given to the inward and outward reality instead of the perfectly general designation, "be it what it may." Now, why is this change made? We know ourselves to be minds, conscious minds, capable of will and intelligence, and because we see in nature signs of the operation of a similar mind, and at the same time feel in our hearts the longing for union with such a mind, we postulate the great synthesis of religion. And experience justifies that postulate. There is such a union, and it is the joy, the charm, the enlargement, the elevation, the

enfranchisement of our whole life. Before, then, you can kill religion, you must destroy humanity, for belief in religion is bound up with the very roots of its existence.

But still are there, let us ask, no rational difficulties in religion? Nay, the whole subject bristles with them. How can a union take place, it may be asked, between realities so incommensurable, without disturbing if not destroying the fundamental properties of the weaker? How can man's freedom of will be preserved in union with a will which is Almighty? How can the distinction of finite individuality be preserved when the pious soul loses itself in God? The answer is that all these difficulties mean not impossibilities in fact, but limitations in our power of thinking. The great union does take place, and no such consequences follow as our feeble thought forecast.

Union with God brings with it not only joy and light, but also an intensification and heightening of the very powers which we feared it would obliterate. Will especially now feels itself able to do what conscience demands and reason commends, it can realize the life of love. Instead of extinguishing freedom, the great religious synthesis has increased it. Every voice of every religious soul under every sky, in every age, affirms that it is so. What, then, is the value of the objection that we cannot understand how it is? Reality is always greater than thought. It shrouds mysteries which thought cannot penetrate. It only shows us its shadows on the wall. Now, St. Paul, as we saw, taught the possibility of another and a more fruitful spiritual synthesis, of a union, not only between the soul and God, but also between the soul and the glorified Christ. It is sought, as I have said, to exclude the consideration of this teaching by the initial rationalistic objection that we cannot tell how such a thing may be.

But what is the value of that objection in the light of what has just been urged? You cannot tell how anything can be; how the little flower in the wall-cranny can be what it is; how the soul of man can enter into communion with nature or with God. But are you then so foolish as to proclaim a universal scepticism? No; you appeal to experience, and you bid thought to remember that it is not the judge, but the mere observer and creature of reality. Whether there can be such a thing as a real union between the soul and the glorified Christ is a question to be determined by the appropriate evidence, and its consideration is not to be intercepted or prejudiced by the utterly irrelevant objection that we are not able to understand how it can be. Its affirmation is at any rate the central fact of the Pauline Gospel. It would weary you if I attempted to show how many critics and religious teachers have recognised this truth.

Two testimonies, however, I will cite, as those of men whose freedom from dogmatic bias is as conspicuous as their keen critical ability. I mean F. C. Baur and Professor Jowett. I have frequently had occasion to differ from Baur, but I bear willing testimony to the masterly way in which, in general, he has analysed St. Paul's teaching. What, then, according to him, is the central thought of the Apostle? "The fundamental and ever-recurring thought of the Apostle," says he, "is that only in union with Christ can the Christian be what he is and ought to be as a Christian; that in Him alone has he the essential principle of his being and his living, or is he himself a Christ, as the German language expresses so significantly, in the Christian name."

Not less decided and explicit is the opinion of Professor Jowett. "Everywhere St. Paul speaks of the Christian as

one with Christ. He is united with Him, not in His death only, but also in all the stages of His existence. . . . There is something meant by this language, which goes beyond the experience of ordinary Christians. Something, perhaps, more mystical than in these latter days of the world most persons seem to be capable of feeling; yet the main thing signified is the same for all ages, the knowledge and love of Christ, by which men pass out of themselves to make their will His and His theirs. And often they walk with Him on earth, not in a figure only; and find Him near them, not in a figure only, in the valley of death." These last touching words, coming from a man so sincere and reticent, are something more than a statement of what St. Paul teaches. They are Professor Jowett's own testimony to the reality of the fact which that teaching expresses. I recognise, of course, that if I ask you to believe that the affirmation of a spiritual union between Christ and the believer is the central truth of St. Paul's doctrine, I must give you other evidence besides that of the opinions of great critics, however eminent.

But here I am met by a difficulty. The Scriptural evidence of the fact becomes perplexing by its very abundance. Its exhibition becomes a question not of citing a few proof texts, but of quoting large portions of St. Paul's Epistles, and of calling attention, not only to explicit statements, but to obscure and underlying currents of sentiment, which are sometimes more convincing than any statements in the world. It is thus impossible to produce all the Scriptural evidence, but I will try to help your thought by referring to expressions which may suggest many others.

There is one pregnant expression of St. Paul, which is often, unfortunately, concealed in the Authorised Version by loose translation. I mean the phrase "in Christ." Of

course, if the thought of union with Christ be central with St. Paul, we should expect him to see and to say that all our graces, privileges, and achievements are to be found or gained in Christ.

And this he actually does say, as the following sentences will indicate: "The grace of God is given you in Christ;" "There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;" "We are sanctified in Christ Jesus;" 'We are created in Christ Jesus to good works;" "We are alive unto God in Jesus Christ our Lord;" "If any man be in Christ he is a new creature;" "To me to live is Christ;" "Ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God;" "Christ in you, the hope of glory;" "Of Him are ye in Christ Jesus, who is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification and redemption." And, as the crowning passage of this class, and the one which most clearly expresses what they all declare, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

Again, St. Paul strives to suggest the intimacy of the spiritual union between Christ and believers by certain striking images. He compares it to that of the stones of a building, "In whom ye are builded together for an habitation of God through the Spirit;" and, once more, to the vital bond which unites the head and members of a body, "Ye are the body of Christ;" "Grow up into Him in all things which is the head, even Christ."

Further, and this is most significant of the central importance which he attached to the truth we are considering, he saw it embodied in concrete shape in the two great sacraments of the Christian Church. Christians, he says, are buried with Christ in baptism, in which also they have risen with Him. Nay, he goes so far as to say to the Galatians, "As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on

Christ;" upon which passage Baur remarks: "He who puts on a garment goes altogether inside it, and identifies himself with it," as happens to the Christian "in this new relation, which is entered externally by baptism, internally by faith."

Not less clear and significant again is the Apostle's teaching on Holy Communion. He sees in the bread which is broken "the communion of the body of Christ," as in the cup "the communion of His blood." It is for this reason that Baur calls the Lord's Supper "the central point of the Christian religion;" just as the sacrificial altar was of Judaism, and the sacrificial cultus generally of heathenism. The Christian Church has certainly not been mistaken in concluding that when her Master separated and embodied in visible form the great spiritual truth that all her life must come from His death, and be appropriated by her faith, he was setting before her eyes that truth which was of most essential import. Why, indeed, is this sacred dramatization of one particular truth to be perpetually repeated, set before men's eyes again and again, and pressed home upon their hearts with all its life-giving power whenever they come together to break the bread? Because in it was set forth, in a shape equally intelligible to rich and poor, to those whose hearts were to be reached through their thoughts, and to those whose hearts were to be reached through their eyes, the one great central truth of the faith, that all life is to be sought in Christ, that all power of righteous willing is to be gained from Christ, and that all filial communion with God is to be kept in Christ. Every faithful and devout communion was thus to bring to mind those wonderful words of the Master, "I am the vine, ye are the branches. As the branch cannot bring forth fruit except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me;"

and again, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you."

I assume, of course, that in these latter words our Lord pointed to a spiritual fact. And how can this be doubted? Have you any doubt of the meaning of the metaphor when it is said of husband and wife that they shall be one flesh? Do you think when you hear these words of any mere material connection? Not for a moment. You know it means that husband and wife shall be as truly one in thought, feeling, and will as if their souls dwelt in one tabernacle, as if they formed "a two-celled heart, beating with one full stroke." The metaphor is so strong, because it has to picture forth a spiritual relationship so close. Now, taking this common-sense canon with you to the interpretation of the other metaphor, can there be any doubt of its scope and import?

Why does Christ in this latter case so far strengthen the figure as to declare that we must not only become part of His flesh, but further eat and assimilate it? Plainly, because of the greater closeness and intimacy of the bond which is to bind us to the Bridegroom of our souls. We are not only to be one with Him, but are to be so wholly filled and formed by that spirit of His which we gain in faith, that it is no longer an exaggeration to say with the Apostle, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." There you have got to the very heart of the heart of the Christian faith. There you come plumb centre. Everything leads up to that; everything goes forth from that. No doctrine is true which does not rest on that fact and utter it. No life is Christian which does not go forth from it and exhibit it. It shows us that a Christian is nothing less than Christ born again in a new individual soul, and that the Church is simply here to proclaim and facilitate this new birth of

men. When the church does this it does its work, and if it fails in this, no matter what its theology, or its ecstasy, or its ritual, or its outward activity, it might just as well be a mere philosophical school, or worse, a heathen cult, "a creed outworn."

In one word, Christ came in the flesh, to establish a new religious synthesis, a closer union between heaven and earth, a nearer and a dearer and a more fruitful bond, of which He was Himself the central link, between man and God. But now, if this were the great object of Christ's coming, life, death, and resurrection, we may easily see that it must have involved two results of vast and eternal significance; the one objective and the other subjective, the one having reference to God, and the other to man. If Christ be the germ and basis of a new humanity, the question may first be asked, how will God regard and treat this new humanity; and, secondly, since this humanity is a spiritual body, into which men are not naturally born, but into which they must come by some spiritual act or acts of their own, the question may be asked, What must men do in order to enter this body?

The former question I shall deal with in my last lecture; the latter I shall attempt to answer now.

To the latter question. St. Paul's answer is given shortly, but fully and unmistakably, in Gal. ii. 1, "We believed in Jesus Christ that we might be justified by belief of Christ, and not by works of law." We have seen before that it is only when we are in Christ, vitally united to Him, that He is made unto us righteousness. When, therefore, we are told that this righteousness which He is made unto us comes by faith, and not by works of law, this is equivalent to the statement that it is by faith alone we enter into union with Christ.

Works of law are, indeed, necessary to us. No man can be a true Christian whose life is not determined by the twofold law, "Thou shalt love God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyself." If faith be real and Christian, it will thus "work by love." Still work is not the means, nor is love the means, by which we come unto Christ, and submit to Christ, and give over our will to Christ. The act by which we do this, and by which alone, from the nature of the case, we can do it, is that act of utter trust and self-surrender which we call faith. When people have not seen this, but have attached to Christian faith others of the several meanings which in course of time have gathered round it, this has mainly been because they have failed to notice that Christian faith is, in its central and highest meaning, affiance on a person, and not merely belief in a truth or a fact.

When St. Paul was asked by the Philippian gaoler, what he should do to be saved, the Apostle answered, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ;" not on a gospel or a law, but on a Person, on Jesus Christ. In like manner he says to the Romans, "Ye are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," and to the Philippians, "To you it is given to believe in Him."

Again, we observe that the Apostle's teaching did but echo that of his Divine Master. "He that believeth on Me," said our Lord, "shall never thirst." "He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life." "He that liveth and believeth on Me shall never die." The corresponding passage in the Synoptical Evangelists is equally tender and clear: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

Now the faith that is fixed on a person is by that very fact declared to be trust or affiance. When I say I believe in a man, not in his teaching or his testimony, but in him, I mean that I have learnt to trust him, that I lean on him, and that, more or less, I allow him to lead and direct me both in opinion and in life. And if the man whom I trust were like Jesus Christ, one whom I could trust illimitably, I should be ready, in that case, to yield up to him my whole heart and will. But, now, in connection with the Lord Jesus, we have found a further special reason for this trust. As glorified Saviour, He has constituted a new bond of union between me and God. In Christ I find my Heavenly Father. In Him I find equally my Father's pardon and favour, and my own life and power to do well. And, therefore, believing in Christ means, not only trust for example and guidance, but also for power and peace, for life and death, for time and eternity. Every careful student of the New Testament has found accordingly, in this self-surrender to Christ, the profounder meaning of faith.

"That," says Jowett, "which takes us out of ourselves and links us with Christ, which anticipates in an instant the rest of life, which is the door of every heavenly and spiritual relation, is faith."

"Faith," says Archdeacon Farrar, "is man's trustful acceptance of God's gift, rising to absolute self-surrender, and culminating in personal union with Christ."

"The result of faith," again says Reuss, "is the abnegation of the man's own will, the abdication of self . . . an absolute subordination, in short, of the whole human personality to the personality of the Saviour." "We arrive here," he proceeds, "at a capital dogma of the Pauline theology, which may be said to govern all the rest. Faith lies beyond the province of analysis, for it may be laid down

as a fundamental principle that in this faith the life of the individual is merged in a life not his own."

Of course such faith as this does not arise in the heart without preparation. You cannot trust one whom you have never known, and never learnt in some measure to love. And so, before faith can be possible, there must be an exercise of reason to know the Christ, and a going forth of love produced by such knowledge. Neither of these, however, is Christian faith. Both together are conditions of that change of mind towards Christ which is expressed in our word repentance. Both may exist in considerable degree, and yet not be intense enough to induce a man to make that act of utter self-surrender which is meant by faith. A man may know and love Christ; he may hover near to Christ. Like the wise scribe of the Gospel, he may not be far from the kingdom of heaven. And yet because he has not made the great resolve to give up not only the whole world, but self also for Christ, he has not passed into the kingdom, he has not crossed the bounds of the new humanity.

"Faith," says Reuss, "is, according to St. Paul, at once an act of the reason, or conviction; an act of the heart, or trust; an act of the will, or self-surrender. The last element is, however, the most important of the three; the only one, indeed, which makes faith the centre of the whole system, since by it alone does faith become the means of justification."

Now a man may, to a certain extent, believe on Christ with his reason, and trust Christ with his heart, while yet he holds back that decisive act of will by which he surrenders himself to what he knows and loves. Does any one doubt whether such whole-hearted self-surrender be necessary in a Christian man? Let him remember the Lord's own words,

"If any man come to Me, and hate not his father and mother and wife and children, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple."

Faith, then, in its highest Pauline meaning, is that decisive act of self-surrender by which the soul gives itself to Christ, by which it enters the new humanity. And inasmuch as it is only there that God can look upon a man with satisfaction, it is by faith alone, as subjective condition, that a man is justified. Further, inasmuch as it is only there that a man finds and takes the spirit of Christ, it is through faith, in the first instance, that he works the works of God. Faith, in a word, is the one necessary subjective link in establishing spiritual union between Christ and the soul. That once established, everything is possible, for everything we need is to be found in Christ. Higher reaches of knowledge are there. For in Christ we come to know our Heavenly Father, not only in a higher measure, but in a different way, in that way of personal intercourse in which a father comes to know his child, and a husband his wife.

Since, however, the intercourse between God and the soul, in Christ, is far closer and more inward than any which is brought about by human relationships, words scarcely serve the Apostle to describe its uniqueness. "I bow my knees for you," he tells the Ephesians, "to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ . . . that ye may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the length and breadth, and depth and height, and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye may be filled with all the fulness of God." Again, vaster depths of love are there. So near is God and so precious in Christ, that, stimulated by the spirit of adoption, we can cry with all filial confidence, "Abba Father." So dear, again, is man in Christ, so dear not only in his obedience, but also in his

rebellion, when as prodigal he is sinning and suffering in the far country, that, carried away on the stream of Christ's redeeming impulse, we are ready to do all things for him, and to suffer all things if only we may bring him home again.

All things are thus possible in Christ, all knowledge, all love, all hope, all joy, all sympathy, all suffering, all service. And all things are made possible, objectively through the preparation of the new humanity, and subjectively through the faith by which we are brought into union with it. Do you not see, then, how easily all the apparent contradictions of the apostolic teaching find their harmony and reconciliation if only we get to this central point of view, and throw on them the light of the glorious truth which shines there?

Faith without works of a law must secure our justification, because it is not the effort at obedience, but the decisive act of self-surrender, which unites us to Christ, in whom alone justification is to be found. But faith also must work by love; for who can give up his whole soul and life to Christ without loving Him; or who, again, can sink his will in Christ's without gaining that royal will of self-sacrifice which the Master perfected and the Spirit of Christ bestows? If, then, faith, by bringing us into Christ, must fill us with the spirit of self-sacrifice, it is certain that that spirit in turn must overflow in works of love.

But let us not forget the order and true relation of these thoughts. Human lives are like trees planted in the soil of nature. So long as they abide in that soil, although here and there good trees will be found bringing forth abundant fruit, yet in general their product will be scanty and poor. Before the vital power of the trees can be stimulated to its utmost possibilities, they must be transplanted into a new soil; the soil of Christ's heavenly life. The act of transplanting is the act of faith. This brings us into the new

humanity. If now you desired to account for the increased fruitfulness of those trees; to what would you ascribe it? Objectively to the better quality of the soil (type of Christ's life), and subjectively, with regard to the circumstances of the trees, to the act of transplanting (type of our faith). In other words, faith produces works, not works faith; faith increases love, not the opposite; but all alike, both faith and work, and the love by which faith works, are dependent for their efficacy on union with Christ; on a Divine planting in the soul of the new humanity.

All comparisons of this kind must fail somewhere, and I am fully sensible that there are aspects of the deep spiritual relations of which I have been speaking, which this rough illustration fails to represent. It will, however, have answered its purpose if it helps to clear our thoughts upon the special point under review, the nature and office of faith. And, observe, it is exactly at this point that we are able to understand the depth of the Galatian fall. The Galatians wished to be circumcised, and to gain the privilege of being Jews as well as Christians. But, asks St. Paul, do you know the meaning of what you seek? Circumcision is the sign of admission to the Mosaic covenant. And what are the terms of that covenant? "I testify to every man," says the Apostle, "who is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law." To go back into Judaism is to take upon yourselves an obligation which, out of Christ, no man is able to discharge. He who would save himself by effort, in virtue of his own attempt to keep the law, should remember what is written: "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them."

Now, if a curse rests on every man whose obedience to the law is imperfect, then it assuredly rests on every one

who seeks to earn salvation by obedience. For no human being, be his efforts never so strenuous, can succeed in rendering a perfect obedience to the law. But this is not the worst. Do you not see, cries St. Paul, that you are not only bringing yourselves under a curse by this disastrous lapse, but also severing yourselves from Christ, falling from His grace? "Behold I, Paul, say unto you, that if ye receive circumcision, Christ will profit you nothing."

What a whole worldful of meaning there lay in that warning, our investigation of to-day must have convinced us. For what was the purpose of Christ's coming? As we have seen, it was to create a new bridge of communication between earth and heaven; to establish a humanity filled with the richest gifts of Divine grace, with all the light of heavenly truth, and all the fire of heavenly love. It was, further, to make this humanity accessible to man on the simple condition of faith; a faith equally possible to all, whether Jew or Gentile, bond or free. To supply these means of making men good and happy, all the resources of Divine mercy had been strained to the uttermost. The Holiest surrendered His Only Begotten; the Infinite came into the limitation of human flesh, that, wrestling there with human sin, and pleading there with human obduracy, He might fill the world with so radiant a light of Divine love as had never shone before the eyes of immortals.

And yet these blind insensate Galatians were acting as if all that were nothing, as if man could do without Christ, as if in the old ground of nature, with the word of a law behind him, man could subdue his selfish will to live, and rise into the self-denying will to love. The new humanity gone, and faith, the condition of union with it, gone, what was left to them but the old unavailing struggles, the old miserable sense of failure and condemnation, the old bondage and

curse and impotence of the law? Nay, it was not only stultification of themselves, but it was further treason to the world to let go this glorious truth on which they had once taken hold. They had entered into this new union in Christ between God and man. They had seen, in Him who constituted it, all which the human race needed, all goodness and happiness, all holiness and peace. They had seen men of every race, Jews and Gentiles, entering into this union, and gaining all its blessings on the simple condition of faith.

And yet these Galatians, who had seen all this, who had seen that the Gospel brought what all men needed, and placed it where all men could reach it, were ready to fall back into the bondage of a narrow nationalism soon to perish, and into the futile efforts of an unhelped nature, whose groans and cries of baffled endeavour filled all the ages of the past.

Let us pray that the apostolic warning may not be lost upon us, my friends: for the danger of such lapses from the spirit to the letter, from the second to the first Adam, from the self-surrender of faith to the self-seeking of performance, or the self-pleasing of an outward and merely ceremonial religion, is as great to-day as it was eighteen hundred years ago. And if we are to escape such mistake and reaction, it can only be by setting clearly before our eyes, and holding steadfastly in our hearts, such truths as those which we have been considering to-day; that all the resources of the new life are laid up for us in Christ; that we can only gain them, each for himself, by the self-surrender of faith, and that they are thus prepared for us, and taken by us; that through the long conflict and discipline of life they may make us perfect at length, as our "Father which is in heaven is perfect."

VI.

I ENDEAVOURED to show you in my last lecture what was the central truth of the Christian religion. We found it to be this, that Jesus Christ had established a new religious synthesis, a new and closer and more fruitful union between God and man. The possibility of such a union already exists for the whole world. Through His death and resurrection Christ has created a new humanity, filled with the Divine Spirit, and with all the gifts and resources of a new life. This life is sufficient for the regeneration of all, and is freely offered to all.

"God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." In God's loving purpose, the whole world is already reconciled to Him in Jesus Christ. But man is free. He may refuse the life and grace offered to him in Christ. And, therefore, to the Apostle's announcement of God's completed reconciliation he has to add the exhortation, "Be ye therefore reconciled to God."

Now, by what act of his own can man freely accept this life of reconciliation? We found that it was by that act of complete self-surrender which we call faith. Let a man believe in Christ, and he passes into the new humanity, and is regarded and treated by God as forming part of it. But now the question may be asked, What occasioned the need for this new religious synthesis? Why was it necessary that Christ should come in our flesh? that He should

suffer and die and rise again, and so pass into His glory? We have already reached a satisfactory answer to this question from the human side. The creative force of the new humanity was needed by man because of his incapacity, without Divine aid, to make the will to love triumph over the will to live.

But is this all? Have we exhausted the reasons for the creation of this new relation in Christ when we have shown man's need of it? Did not a necessity for it exist also on the Divine side? Could God have entered into reconciliation with man without it? If the Divine love provided this new humanity, did not the Divine justice also demand it? And, if so, why? This is the most difficult question in theology. It is the one which has been most largely treated, and most fiercely debated. It is the one upon which agreement, or even general satisfaction, seems to be most hopeless. And yet it is the one upon which, above all others, it is important that we should come to some approximately satisfactory conclusion.

So many things have been said upon this subject by theologians, which seem to dishonour God, and to outrage the moral sense of good men, that if, on the authority of Holy Scripture, we could put these things aside it would do more perhaps than anything else to dispel unwelcome doubts, and to make faith possible to those who ask nothing better than that they may be able to believe. But what possible hope is there of a successful issue to an investigation which has been made a hundred times with the too familiar results of failure, dissatisfaction, and disagreement? None whatever, I answer, unless we can discover a better method of inquiry. What changed the whole course of scientific study after Bacon? What banished from such study, as by magic, the old bitterness, unfruitfulness, and stagnation?

The discovery of a new method of study, the substitution of the inductive for the deductive method of investigation.

May we not hope, then, for better results in the inquiry which we undertake to-day, if only we adopt a more reasonable method of investigation?

It has been too common a practice in the past to begin by fastening on particular phrases of metaphors in the writings of St. Paul, to proceed by giving to those phrases an arbitrary meaning, and then to conclude by deducing from such meanings a number of apparently necessary consequences. Let me give an example of what I mean. As early as the days of Irenæus and Origen men fastened upon the Scriptural statement that Christ was our ransom. Now, a ransom is the price paid for the liberation of a slave. Man, then, who needed a ransom was in slavery to some one. To whom then? Who was the slave-master? Clearly, it was urged, the devil. To the devil, then, the ransom must be paid. God, who was just, could not deprive him of his right without giving him an equivalent.

But where could an equivalent be found for all the souls of sinful men whom the devil held in bondage? God offered as the equivalent His Only Begotten Son. The devil joyfully accepted the offer, and Christ was given up to him in death. But lo! in the moment of his triumph he discovered that he had been the victim of an illusion. He had seized upon God, and found himself in the grasp of the Omnipotent. He could not keep his prey. Christ rent the bars of death and hell, spoiled the spoiler, and led captivity captive. It might have been thought, perhaps, that the idea of God's practising a fraud upon the evil one would have checked this repulsive and audacious speculation. But no such thing. These early theologians rather rejoiced in the thought that the arch-deceiver had been deceived.

They cried exultingly that the flesh of Christ had been the bait, and when the great dragon took it he found himself caught on the hook of Christ's Divinity.

We recoil from such expressions now. And since Anselm pointed out that the affirmation of any right in one of God's creatures to hold others of His creatures in bondage was an insult to the Divine Sovereignty, the whole theory has been gradually abandoned. Not in vain, however, was it adopted and held as an orthodox explanation by the Christian Fathers for a thousand years, if we only learn the two great lessons which it should teach us: first, that the doctrine of the Atonement may be true, and yet an orthodox explanation of the manner in which the Atonement was made may be untrue; and, secondly, that the language of the Apostles is not that of scientific exposition, but of popular exhortation, that figures of speech are not to be taken for abstract statements nor metaphors for arguments.

Let me endeavour to enforce this latter caution by a further consideration of the character of the writings of St. Paul.

Let us remember, in the first place, that those writings are familiar letters, occasioned by special emergencies, dealing with the difficulties of special Churches, and thrown off for the most part in the heat of anxiety or indignation. How, then, can we expect in them scientific language, terms carefully chosen, accurately defined, and employed with a uniformity of meaning? Far more reasonably should we anticipate what we find, vigorous figurative language, fired by deep feeling, and addressed rather to the heart than to the understanding.

Again, remembering the education and history of St. Paul, we should surely expect him to employ largely the terms, figures, and incidents of the Old Testament. A Christian

man who had been brought up as a Jew, and who had therefore been taught from his earliest days to drape his spiritual and ethical ideas in the ritual and ceremonial figures of the law, would almost feel compelled to carry over his customary speech into that world of new thoughts which had been created by Christianity. In like manner the prophets of Israel were compelled to seek their pictures of the world's spiritual future among the incidents of Israelitish history. Where else could they have obtained the drapery of their awful visions? The Church of the future was accordingly represented by them as Israel, the Church of the present; while the enemies of that Church were conceived under the forms of Babylon, Edom, or Egypt, the actual and well-known foes of Israel.

Now, how were these passages to be interpreted after the kingdom of God had been actually established by Jesus Christ? Were the figures to be illuminated by the light of the fact? or was the fact to be determined by the form of the figures? Theological students know that two schools of prophetic interpretation were developed out of this question, the one holding that Israel is always the literal Israel, and Babylon the actual city on the Euphrates; the other (that which at the present day is everywhere prevailing), that Israel is but the Church of God, and Babylon the spiritual enemy of that Church. The one subordinates the fact to the form; the other explains the form by the fact.

Now, why is the latter school everywhere prevailing at the present day? Because it is seen that its critical basis is the more reasonable; that if the prophets were driven from the nature of the case to seek the drapery of their visions from history, that mere drapery ought not to be allowed to determine the meaning of the visions. We should surely adopt this same reasonable canon in our

interpretation of the sacrificial and ceremonial language of St. Paul. The circumstances of the Apostle's past life compelled him to use such language. It was the historically determined garb of his thought. How unreasonable, then, to suppose that the earlier meaning of this language is to be allowed to impose itself on the vaster thoughts and deeper feelings which the Apostle cast into these ancient moulds!

I tried to show you in my last lecture that we know what was the master-thought of the apostle. It stands out clearly in its own light. Let us take it with us then, and allow it largely to determine for us the new Christian sense in which the apostle employed the ancient sacrificial terms, or referred to imperfect shadows of the good things to come.

Well has it been said by Archdeacon Farrar, respecting St. Paul's familiar application of the history of Abraham: "The Apostle did not derive his views from these considerations, but discovered the truths revealed to him in passages which, until he thus applied them, would not have been seen to involve this deeper significance."

There was still another special reason (brought out clearly by the circumstances of the Galatian lapse) for St. Paul's extensive employment of Jewish ideas and phraseology. Not only were those forms of expression natural to him, as an Israelite and a student of the Jewish schools, but they were further forced upon him by the conflicts of his own age. It might seem strange at first sight that St. Paul should so anxiously seek support for his gospel in the events and shadows of the Old Testament. He says that law cannot save, that when opposed by the selfish impulses of the flesh it becomes the strength of sin, that it was added because of transgressions, put in between the two covenants of promise because of the spiritual back-

wardness of the Jewish people ; because, like children, they needed a system of particular rules, and could not live on general principles like those of mature age. The highest office which he assigns to the law is that of a pedagogue to bring us to Christ. Why, then, does he not plant himself firmly and independently on that which is of eternal significance, and draw all promise and precept from that? Specially, why does he not follow this method when writing to Gentiles?

We can understand why a writer like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews should strive to show to Hebrew Christians how Christ fulfilled all the shadowy fore-intimations of the law. But what need was there for St. Paul, writing to Gentile Christians like those of Corinth and Galatia, to adopt this course? The history of the Galatian lapse gives the answer to that question. Who were they who, creeping into Gentile Churches in the absence of their great Founder, tried to draw them away from Christ? They were Christian Judaizers, who spoke in the name of law and circumcision. It was necessary, therefore, for the Apostle to meet these ritualists on their own ground, and to show from the law itself that their doctrines were false and pernicious.

How strikingly this motive comes out in the sudden question to the Galatians, "Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law?" And then he introduces the allegory of the sons of the bondwoman and of the free. We see, then, that St. Paul was driven not less by the circumstances of the time than by his own education and ordinary habit of thought into a large use of Old Testament figures and phrases. He sought out points of comparison. He seized upon analogies, however slight, and sometimes found them in correspondences so remote

as to appear to us almost trifling. For all these reasons it is obviously unwise to make too much of sacrificial or ceremonial phraseology in the writings of St. Paul. Let us rather interpret the less certain by the more certain, the figure by the fact, the metaphor by the thought which takes form in it.

Carrying with us this great principle of interpretation, it seems to me that it may be less difficult than many imagine to come to reasonable conclusions about several disputed points in the doctrine of the Atonement. It is certain that in the Pauline theology Christ's death is the event which is of most decisive importance in connection with the remission of sins. "Christ died for the ungodly," says the Apostle. And again: "He died for our sins;" "Having made peace through the blood of His cross;" "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified." Now, what gave this decisive importance to the death of Christ? It has commonly been said, Christ's vicarious suffering, in which He bore the punishment due to the sins of all the world. This is commonly said and taught, but I am unable to find anything about it in Holy Scripture. The righteous God demands righteousness, not punishment. Jesus is the Lord our righteousness, not the Lord our punishment. What God provides for us is the righteousness of God, not the punishment of Christ. What Christ bears for us is not our punishment, but "our sins in His own body on the tree." "He hath made Him to be sin [not punishment] for us."

Well, but it is asked, What is the meaning of sin here? Surely it will not be held that the sinless Lord was sinful? And if not, how can He in any way bear our sin except by bearing our punishment? That is exactly how all unscriptural dogmatism creeps in. Some particular phrase

is taken, and then, an uncertain and unauthorized inference having been drawn from it, this inference in turn is made the basis of an endless number of other inferences. The thing to be called in question is the first inference; and here the first inference that sin means punishment seems to me to be utterly unauthorized. Christ is indeed said by the Apostle to have been made a curse for us; but in what sense? Was it because God, attributing to Him the guilt of all human sin, pronounced Him accursed on the cross? Nothing can be further from the Apostle's thought. How could God hate and curse His Son, when that Son's will was most humbly bowed in obedience to His own? If there can be variations in a love which is Divine, surely the moment of Christ's death must have been that at which God loved Him most dearly.

Nor is the Apostle's statement at all inconsistent with this view. For how does St. Paul sustain his assertion that Jesus was made a curse for us? By the free quotation from the Old Testament of the words, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree." The manner of our Lord's death brought Him into the position described in these words. In carrying out the will of His Father, and perfecting His own self-sacrifice, our Lord came, on our behalf, into the position of one ceremonially accursed. He may, therefore, be said to have been made a curse for us. This, and this only, is involved in the Apostle's words. I believe, in short, that the conception of our Lord's vicarious punishment, with all its wide-branching and repulsive consequences, has been introduced into the Bible by mere theorists.

Mr. Heard has very ingeniously shown, in his "Old and New Theology," that this theory has passed through three stages, what one may call its stone age, its bronze age, and

its iron age ; and that in each it has expressed the views of a corresponding stage in the advance of legal science.

At first it is purely vindictive ; the expression of the *lex talionis*. God has been injured, and He will have vengeance. Sin can only be washed out in blood ; and blood God will have, if not that of the offender, then that of some other.

In the second stage this theory assumes what may be called a legal form. The offence is conceived of as committed rather against a law than against a person, and it is the law which must have satisfaction. The sin is supposed to be of infinite malignancy, and the law therefore demands a punishment of infinite value.

But, once more, the law will be sufficiently honoured if that punishment fall on one whose sufferings will be by number or by weight an equivalent for the offence. Nowadays, however, lawyers have got beyond that second stage of the legal conception of punishment upon which our theory planted itself. Beccaria showed them that it was not so much the severity as the certainty of punishment which was deterrent, and accordingly legal enactments aim now rather at reformation than retribution. The wrong-doer's crime is before all things against himself ; and it is not only for the sake of society, but also for the sake of the criminal, that he must be punished. Hence, as Mr. Heard shows, there has arisen a corresponding modification in the theory of atonement which we have been examining. Nothing of all this is Scriptural. It is brought in wholly from legal science.

As Reuss has said, "There is not a word of all this weighing and calculating scheme to be found in the writings of St. Paul." And, I may add, with the abandonment of the idea that Jesus bore our sins, by bearing their punishment, all these elaborate theories, with their unethical

complexities, fall away. But how, then, it may be asked, are we to determine the meaning of the phrase, "He bore our sins"? Partly, I answer, by Scriptural usage, and partly by throwing on this difficulty the light of the Gospel's central truth. As Dr. Bushnell has pointed out, there is a passage in Matt. viii. which might have been written to give the exact *usus loquendi* of sacrificial language in the New Testament. Our Saviour passed a certain Sabbath day at Capernaum in healing and teaching. His fatigue of body and mind was excessive, and referring to this the evangelist says, "All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Isaiah the prophet: Himself took our infirmities and bore our sicknesses."

Now this quotation from the Old Testament is of decisive importance for two reasons. It is, first, a quotation from Isa. liii., the common storehouse of such quotations; and, secondly, there can be no doubt of the sense in which the evangelist applied it to our Lord's labours. How did the Lord Jesus bear the sicknesses and infirmities of those whom He healed? He certainly did not bear them literally, becoming sick for the sick and lame for the lame; and He as certainly did not bear them punitively, as undergoing penalties which those sicknesses deserved or betokened. Obviously He bore the sicknesses of others in the personal sufferings which His enterprise of healing brought on Himself. It involved weariness of body, and the pain of protracted sympathy, and the natural disgust inspired by the loathsome consequences of disease.

And what possible reason, let me ask, can there be for adopting any other than the evangelical interpretation of vicarious phraseology, when the disease healed is moral and not physical? The suffering of the healer is in both cases that involved in the effort of healing. Only in the case of

moral disease it is evident that this suffering must be greater. A man labouring under a physical disease is always willing to be healed. But the sinner commonly clings to his sin, and is unwilling to abandon it. He, therefore, who is determined to save him against his will, who, entering with earnestness on the work of redemption, determines to give the sinner no rest in his iniquity, must look for the most determined and envenomed opposition, must prepare himself for hatred, denunciation, scorn, and even death. This, however, is a merely formal distinction. It does not touch the essence of the matter. In the latter case, not less than in the former, the deliverer's suffering comes, not from the literal assumption of the disease or its consequences, but only from the natural results of his effort to banish it. The suffering in this latter case is certainly vicarious. It would never have been experienced but for the sufferer's efforts on behalf of others. And yet is it not the less a perfectly natural and inevitable result of those efforts?

Why should we not say at once, then, that the vicarious suffering of the Lord Jesus was necessitated by the great purpose which brought Him into the world? the purpose, that is, to deliver man from his sin. Nay; is not this causative connection between our Lord's saving purpose and His sufferings distinctly marked in most of those passages to which a different interpretation has been given? Why did our Lord come into the world? "He was manifested," says St. John, "to take away our sins." Why was He called Jesus? "Because He should save His people from their sins." Why was He made sin for us who knew no sin? "That we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." Why did He die for us? "That they which live should not henceforth live to themselves, but to Him who died for them and rose again."

Here in every case it is declared that the final purpose was the deliverance of man from sin. Jesus was humbled, and He suffered, not to bear our punishment, but to take away our sins, to make us holy as He is holy. Christ was the Lamb of God, because He was consecrated and set apart to this redeeming work; and He became that in reality, which all the lambs of the sacrificial system dimly represented, because He did that which they could only dumbly declare ought to be done: "He took away the sins of the world."

Here the central thought of our faith helps us. It shows us how this was done. In our Lord's great enterprise of deliverance, He was called upon to combat sin in its uttermost intensity. As God's enemy and man's destroyer, He pursued it through every disguise of pleasure or hypocrisy, felt all its horror and malignity, resisted all its seduction, defied all its opposition, and finally triumphed over it in death. Thus in His own person He established a humanity free from sin and filled with the spirit of holiness.

Into this new humanity every sinner can enter by faith; and upon so entering it he receives that almighty victorious spirit of Christ which takes away sin in himself. Is not this precisely the experience of those who have passed by faith into union with Christ? When they first gained faith's mighty guerdon, did they not feel a perfect hatred of sin, a joyful love of holiness, a passionate affection for sinners, and, if possible, a still more passionate desire to deliver them from their sins? And what if the flood-tide of that high experience ebbed again? It once rose so high, it once touched the highest cliffs of thought and feeling; we saw it there in all its potency and all its possibilities, a prophecy of victory, a foretaste of heaven.

But, it may be urged, surely in St. Paul's Epistles there

is something more than the natural and necessary consequences of Christ's enterprise of deliverance, and of the sinner's appropriation by faith of the results of that deliverance. Do we not read of imputation, of God's counting a man to be what he is not? Do we not find it said that Adam's sinful acts are imputed to his posterity, and that on the contrary Christ's righteous acts are imputed to those who believe on Him?

Again, I must say that I find nothing of the kind in the New Testament. Long ago, in his clear and convincing essay on this subject, Archbishop Whately observed: "It is not going too far to say that the whole system is made to rest on a particular interpretation of one text;" which interpretation he proceeds to show is untenable. But surely, it will be urged, you admit the fact of imputation in some sense? Of course I do, and so must every sober interpreter of Scripture, when he finds St. Paul using the word no less than eleven times in one chapter, Rom. iv.

But what is it, let me ask, which is there said to be imputed for righteousness? Is it the righteous deeds or death of Christ? Nothing of the kind. It is the faith of Abraham, and the faith of every sinner who, like Abraham, believed in God. There is no fiction here; no impossible transfer of the acts of one moral being to the account of another; but simply the counting of a certain kind of act to be more than it seems. Why this imputation is made, and how it is possible for mercy to make it, will, however, appear more clearly by dwelling for a moment on St. Paul's comparison between Adam and Christ. We are said by the Apostle to inherit Adam's nature, with the sinful impulses and mortal consequences contained therein. And surely this is a fact. Instead of talking about Adam as St. Paul did, and in that age must have done, with the

Bible in his hand, we talk about an original humanity existing on the earth, ages before the Scriptural chronology commences.

But does that alter the spiritual fact on which St. Paul bases his teaching? Put original humanity for Adam, if you will, and is it not still true that every living man has inherited from that original humanity a preponderating tendency of the selfish will, that this evil will appears in all with the dawn of consciousness, and that it cannot be subdued by any mere law or theory which condemns it?

Again, is it not the experience of all believers in Christ that when they come into union with Him by faith they get the power to subdue that selfish will, and to give ascendency to the will to love? Does not Christ become to them more and more, as life goes on, the power of God unto salvation? And are we not assured that this same life of Christ is equally available for all men? If so, then is it not the simple result of human and believing experience that in Adam, or our far-away forefather, all die; and that in Christ, exactly in the same way, all who will are made alive? That from the first Adam we get the will to live, and from the Second Adam the will to love?

What, then, in these circumstances, is meant, let us ask, by imputation, by God's counting that to exist in the believer which as yet is not? Why does St. Paul say that Abraham's faith was reckoned to him for righteousness, and most generally that "the righteousness of God is to all and upon all them that believe"? Does not the central truth of our faith, brought out so clearly by the comparison of the first and Second Adam, give us here again a clear and satisfactory answer? Abraham by faith came into that great general synthesis of religion, into that union with God, in which a man lives by God's Spirit; and thus by his faith

he gained the germ and potency of a righteousness not yet perfectly realised in him. God then, in His mercy, counts the beginning for the completion, the germ for the fruit which lies wrapped up within it. Much more then is this true of those who have entered into the new and richer union which faith establishes between the soul and Christ.

Those who have entered into that union have gained the spirit of Christ, and in that spirit the potency of all its fruits. God then sees those fruits in their germ, and counts the germ for the fruit, beholds, in a word, the completed results of a righteous life in that which carries those results in its bosom. There is no fictitious and impossible transfer here of the acts of one to another, but simply the merciful judgment that a result exists which only exists in potency. That is how mercy judges in us, when it forgives an offender on his repentance. It sees in his change of mind the power and promise of a future change of life, and treats him as if that change were realized. This is the imputation of God. God imputes the result, righteousness, to that faith which, by uniting us to Christ, and making us partakers of His Spirit, anticipates and secures that result.

Once more, however, it may be objected, if this be the meaning of imputation, why does the death of Christ occupy so prominent a position in connection with the remission of sins? Surely if remission depends upon union with Christ, it would be more natural to connect this result objectively with Christ's resurrection, that event by which He passed into the spiritual world, where alone faith can unite us with Him. That is a natural question, and it demands and deserves a satisfactory answer. Nor is it difficult again from the point of view of the great central doctrine of our faith to give it such an answer. It was only by His death that Christ proved His will to deliver us to be

the perfect loving will of His heavenly Father. Before death, even the moment before, it was still possible that He might come short of the perfect redeeming love of God. By temptation or by oppression He might still have been turned aside from His task, might still have been proved less than the perfect redeemer of man.

Never say that a man is perfectly good till he dies is the proverb of worldly wisdom. He may falter and fall even on the brink of the grave. He is not thoroughly proved till his whole course is run. That is why the friends of Gordon glory in his martyr's death. His course is victoriously finished; his glorious life of self-sacrifice is made circular and complete. It can never be made less than beautiful and great. So also, by our Saviour's death, with a prayer for His murderers on His lips, He has fully proved Himself the perfect reflection of God's love, the perfect Deliverer of man.

Once more, by His death, Christ not only perfected the past of redeeming effort, but also prepared the future of redeeming victory. This view has special importance in connection with the Pauline gospel. For this gospel had little to do with what went before the death of the Redeemer. The Christ whom St. Paul preached was the risen and glorified Christ. The salvation which he proclaimed depended on the new life of Him who had passed to His glory. The Apostle declared that even if he had known Christ after the flesh, henceforth he would know Him no more.

To St. Paul, then, Christ's death was just as much the necessary introduction to the ministry of the Spirit, as the baptism in Jordan had been to the ministry of the flesh. On the one hand, it finished and completed Christ's personal work on earth, His work of preparation; and, on the other,

it introduced and made possible His work of intercession before God, and of regeneration in the human soul. Here was its advantage as a central fact over the Resurrection. It combined the work of the past and the future. It finished the former, while it introduced the latter; and it is for this reason that St. Paul could say to the Corinthians, "I determined to know nothing among you but Jesus Christ, and Him crucified."

It must not, however, be supposed that because the death of Christ was of central therefore it was of sole significance in respect to the remission of sins. We are warned most impressively of the mistake of such a view by the variety of the causes to which both justification and remission of sins are attributed in the writings of St. Paul. We are said to be justified "by God's grace;" and again "by faith without deeds of law;" and again "by Christ's blood;" and yet once more by His resurrection, He was "raised again for our justification." In like manner, if Christ's blood is said "to be shed for the remission of sins," on the other hand men are told to be "baptized for the remission of sins," and again that "whosoever believeth in Him shall receive the remission of sins."

Such expressions could never have resulted from the view that justification or remission of sins came from Christ's death alone. In order to give to them all their due place and value, we must seek a more general point of view; that, in fact, which we have already recognised as of central importance, that objectively we are justified and pardoned through union with Christ. Looking around us from thence, we see all subordinate truths falling into place and grouping themselves harmoniously. Justification is by Christ's death, because only through death could the new humanity have been established. It is through Baptism

and faith ; for only by the one externally, and by the other internally, could we have been introduced into that humanity. It is through Christ's resurrection, because only through His resurrection could He pass into the state where faith can find Him and dwell with Him.

The Lord's death was not enough for our salvation. "If Christ be not raised," said St. Paul, "your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins." "A dead Saviour is no saviour," cries Dr. Vaughan ; "the resurrection of Christ was necessary to complete His Atonement." I trust that it will be clear to you now that it is only from the vantage-ground of the central truth of our faith that we can satisfactorily explain all the various images, metaphors, and arguments of St. Paul with respect to the Atonement ; and equally that, if we stand firmly at this point of view, we have no need of any of those arbitrary hypotheses which are mainly responsible for making this doctrine a stumbling-block to good and reasonable men.

I have nowhere in this lecture, you will perceive, either questioned the truth of the Atonement or thrown doubt on any of those ideas which naturally and necessarily grow out of it. I believe in a real atonement, in a real reconciliation of man to God in the body of Christ. I believe that this atonement was vicariously made, that we never could have attained to it unless Christ had prepared for us that union with God which I have called the new religious synthesis. I believe, further, that in preparing this atonement Christ offered satisfaction to God by presenting to Him a humanity in which He could be well pleased ; and that, in fine, He became a propitiation by giving the answer of a perfectly approving and submissive will to that Divine indignation which must ever be excited by the spectacle of defiant wickedness.

But while thus I believe heartily in the doctrine of the Atonement, I am sensible that with respect to the manner in which that Atonement was made my faith departs widely from that of many good and intelligent Christians. But then remember that questions about the manner of the Atonement are not *de fide*. Our own Church, while affirming decisively the fact, says not one word as to the manner of it. Good men in all ages have differed on this latter question.

Gregory Nazianzen numbers speculations upon the sufferings of Christ "among those things on which it is useful to have correct ideas, but not dangerous to be mistaken." Let us be charitable, then, to those who differ from us on such questions; but also let us strive with all our might to clear this doctrine from untrue and unscriptural elements, and so make it to ourselves and our brethren a comfort and not a perplexity, a tower of strength and not an occasion of falling. To have got rid of the suspicion that there was something arbitrary and fictitious in the righteousness of God, to have attained to the conviction that it is ethical and spiritual through and through, has been to me an inexpressible deliverance. Mystery does not trouble me. I see mystery everywhere; mystery in the being of the meanest thing that is. That God, therefore, should be a mystery, and man a mystery, and their spiritual union in Christ a mystery, is what I expect. But things which outrage my reason and offend my conscience are not mysteries, they are fallacies, impossibilities; things not above my understanding, but repugnant to it. I cannot believe them. All such, thank God, the study of the Holy Scripture has cleared away from my belief in the Atonement.

And now that doctrine is to me a manifestation of the Divine love which so inconceivably magnifies the glory of

God as to make religion a joy and an inspiration; and to encircle all human life, whether here or hereafter, with that bow of hope which the seer of Patmos saw engirdling the throne of God, "in sight like unto an emerald." May the unfolding of the course of my thought in these lectures make some of you partakers of my joy, and injure no one of the weakest of Christ's little ones. But whether you adopt my explanation of the blessed truths which we have been considering here, or some other, let us never forget that those truths themselves are not dependent upon our explanations of them. "They do not change even with the greater revolutions of things. They are in eternity; and the image of them on earth is not the movement on the surface of the waters, but the depths of the silent sea."

THE COLOSSIAN HERESY.

I.

While St. Paul was in prison at Rome he received a visit from Epaphras, who was, in all probability, the first evangelist of the cities of the Lycus. Whether he had sought the Apostle for the express purpose of making a report on the state of the churches in his district does not appear, but certainly he took occasion by his visit to do so. His report was, on the whole, favourable, although on one point it presented matter for anxious thought. Certain teachers had arisen in the Colossian Church, who were putting forth doctrines which seemed to Epaphras strange and dangerous. He made the Apostle acquainted with them, and asked for his advice and assistance. Thereupon St. Paul wrote a letter, that which we call the Epistle to the Colossians, and sent it to Colossæ, along with two others to different destinations, by the hand of Epaphras. It is to the first of these letters that we are mainly indebted for our knowledge of the Colossian heresy; and if I had spoken to you on this subject a few years ago I should have thought it necessary to say something in support of its genuineness. The advance of criticism has, however, spared me that trouble. There can be little use in defending what few instructed critics would be likely to deny; but to anyone who cares to see the reliableness of our Epistle established in a satisfactory way I may recommend, among other works, the learned and sober Introduction of Dr. Salmon, Regius Professor of Divinity at Dublin.

When, however, one has assumed the genuineness of the Epistle to the Colossians, one has only gone a short way in the task of explaining the Colossian heresy, and the apostolic teaching to which it gave rise. Who were the Colossians? what was their history? and how came they, rather than others, to fall into the opinions which St. Paul deprecates? Such are some of the questions which present themselves to the curious mind, and which I must try to answer in this lecture.

If you take a good map of Asia Minor, as it was in the first century, you will see that the little river Lycus, rising in Mount Cadmus, flows through the south-western region of Phrygia, and falls into the better-known river Mæander. On the opposite sides of this stream, with the valley between them, lay the two well-known cities Hierapolis and Laodicæa; the former a rising and wealthy city and a fashionable watering-place, the latter the capital of a civil diocese, or small province, and already renowned for its commerce, wealth, and distinguished citizens. Hierapolis and Laodicæa were connected by a bridge which crossed the Lycus. Beginning, then, from this bridge, and ascending the Lycus for about eight or ten miles, you would come to Colossæ, which lay on both sides of the stream. Its situation was commanding. It stood at the mouth of a pass in the range of Mount Cadmus, through which went the great highway connecting Western with Eastern Asia. Favoured by its situation, it was in early days a place of considerable importance. Here the great host of Xerxes halted on its march against Greece, and Herodotus calls it "a great city of Phrygia." In the Apostle's days, however, it had shrunk to very small proportions, having suffered much from earthquakes, and from the competition of the neighbouring cities of Laodicæa and

Hierapolis. Bishop Lightfoot observes that "without doubt Colossæ was the least important Church to which any Epistle of St. Paul was addressed."

In the history of religion, however, the importance of places is not to be measured by their size. Small villages like Bethel, Bethlehem, and Nazareth are better known to the whole civilized world than the greatest and wealthiest cities of the past. The history of religion is mainly the history of the rise and spread of opinions and influences; and if those places have, from this point of view, most importance which have witnessed the rise and spread of influential doctrines, then Colossæ cannot be without its interest for the modern Christian. For the opinions which prevailed there, in the Christian Church of the first century, not only spread and took portentous proportions in the century following, but have also, as I hope to show you, a special interest for ourselves.

It becomes, thus, a matter of some importance to determine, if we can, in the first place, what made Colossæ and the neighbouring towns and region a soil specially favourable to the growth of Gnostical opinions. It will have specia significance for the students of those erratic movements of early Christian thought to learn that Colossæ was situated in ancient Phrygia and near to Hierapolis, a noted centre of the passionate mystical devotion of that country. There was to be found the Plutonium, a hot well or spring, from which there issued a mephitic vapour, which was said to be fatal to all except the Galli, the mutilated priests of Cybele, the great mother of the Phrygian cult. If, then, we can only get some trustworthy information as to the history of old Phrygia and the nature of its peculiar faith, we shall have gone far to understand the religious temper and proclivities of the lower classes of Colossæ and its neighbourhood.

No doubt we must make allowance for the several waves of religious and secular influence which had passed successively over the land in times nearer to the apostolic age; but to those who know how long and tenaciously a deep religious influence retains its hold upon the people it will not be necessary to prove that the original religious faith of a country is of the first importance in determining its prevailing temper and susceptibilities. What, then, let us ask, do we know of Phrygia and its religious cult?

Twenty years ago, yea, even ten years ago, I could have told you little more than that Phrygia had been looked upon by the Greeks as the oldest country in the world; that its speech was thought to be the original language of mankind; and that its kings appeared to the Greeks of Ionia and the Troad to be something half divine. The meaning of this, of course, is, that its civilization was so advanced, and its religious culture so august and mysterious, that to semi-barbarians it appeared to belong to a sphere above that of their daily life. But the last ten years have been fruitful of discoveries in Asia Minor, and we now know why the Midases of Phrygia seemed to the rough Greeks to have been associates of the gods.

It has been discovered that Asia Minor has an ancient road-system which radiated from a centre in Cappadocia. Thence went important highways to Sinope, the northern port on the Black Sea, to the Cilician gates on the south-east, and to Sardis in the far west. The significance of this discovery will become apparent if you imagine some one in modern days finding out, for the first time, that the vast system of Roman highways diverged from the old golden milestone in the Roman forum. That fact alone would make it plain that Rome was once the centre of a mighty empire, embracing within its ample bounds all the

countries lying round the Mediterranean. This conclusion would be further confirmed if, at the same time, our imaginary modern antiquary had discovered at Rome the ruins of a vast and wealthy capital. Now all this has happened in Asia Minor. At Pteria in Cappadocia, the centre of the old road-system of Asia Minor, great ruins have been discovered, so vast in their circuit, and so remarkable for their antique rock-sculptures, that they are beyond doubt the most considerable in the whole country. Again, the course of the ancient road from Pteria to Sardis is marked throughout its whole extent by traces of the same archaic art, and at one particular spot in Phrygia (a plateau with perpendicular faces of rock), there lie the ruins of a second city, less extensive, indeed, than the former, but still most remarkable for its vast walls and strangely-inscribed monuments. On comparing the ruins of these great cities of the ante-historical period, it becomes evident that the smaller of the two was the glorious capital of ancient Phrygia, the central seat of that wise and great civilization which so dazzled the imagination of the ancient Greeks. This city is, however, modern by comparison with the Cappadocian Pteria. There was the centre of a vaster, mightier, and far more ancient dominion, which has left the marks of its supremacy in archaic sculptures, and a yet undeciphered script, in all parts of Asia Minor. What was this vast, ancient, wealthy, and powerful empire, the mother of the grand Phrygian civilization? How shall we name it, and where shall we place it among the great monarchies of the past? How, for instance, was it related to the ancient colossal empires of Egypt and Babylonia? The classical historians know nothing of it; and, if it were not for the evidence of our eyes, we might refuse to believe in its existence as resolutely as certain sceptical critics did

twenty years ago. But the spade has been at work since then, and lo! from the ruins of Egypt and Assyria we have dug up the evidence that, at a period long anterior to the days of Moses, the world-empires of the Nile and Euphrates had waged desperate wars, and concluded important treaties with a great northern people, whom the Egyptians call Keta, the Assyrians Khatti, and the Bible Chittim or Hittites. So long as the dominion of the Hittites was supposed to be confined to Syria, their successful resistance to such powers as Assyria and Egypt seemed to be unaccountable. But when we find that Kadesh and Carchemish were nothing more than frontier capitals, and that the heart of the Hittite empire was upon the broad plains and highlands of Asia Minor, we understand whence they drew the vast wealth and great armies which enabled them so long to contend upon equal terms with the strongest empires of the ancient world.

It results, then, from these comparatively recent discoveries, that the ancient Phrygian race owned the sway and inherited the civilization, or perhaps we should rather say contributed to mould the civilization, of the powerful empire of the Hittites. It may be that, when we know more of the antiquities of this great race, we shall be able to give some more adequate account than is now possible of the religious beliefs and feelings of ancient Phrygia. Something, however, is already known, partly from the classical historians, and partly from the monuments. And that something happens to be of great interest in connection with the subject which we are considering.

Amongst the ruins of the ancient Phrygian capital are some very interesting sepulchral monuments. One class of them are called heraldic, because they usually consist of lions rampant, separated by a pillar or some other device.

It is an interesting fact that the oldest great monument on Greek soil, the principal gateway at Mycenæ in Argolis, is surmounted by a heraldic device, which is an exact reproduction of what may be found among the ruins of the old Phrygian capital. This confirms the Greek tradition that the Pelopidæ who erected that gateway were Phrygian immigrants. Amongst the monuments, however, which have a religious significance one of the most interesting is a rock sepulchre, which has sculptured on the walls of its little chamber a rude image of the mother-goddess Cybele, "having on each side of her a lion, which rests its forepaws upon her shoulder, and places its head against hers," just as a domestic cat might do with an indulgent mistress. The lion rubbing its head in loving confidence against the face of the great goddess is as pregnant an expression of the character ascribed by the Phrygians to their great mother as it is possible to conceive. Cybele is thus seen to be an impersonation of that great kind Nature which is loving to all her children, to the fierce lion of the desert as to the little child of the city or the tent. We must not, however, suppose that these ancient Nature-worshippers were blind to the darker aspect of the order in which they lived. Asia Minor, and especially the Phrygian part of it, is a country bare and almost treeless, whose agriculture, the main occupation of the ancient inhabitants, is dependent upon a capricious and often insufficient rainfall. This frequently produced dearth and widespread suffering both to men and beasts. The life of Nature was often burnt up by the fierce summer sun. This fact was mythically represented by the legend of Sabazius, son of the great mother, and representing as such the life of Nature. He was born and flourished in the spring, he was slain by the hot summer sun, and he revived again with the spring of a new year. Cybele was

represented as wailing bitterly at his death and rejoicing at his restoration. Accordingly, the principal religious ceremony of this old Nature cult was a wailing with Cybele at the death of Sabazius. To celebrate this rite men and women went forth into obscure places, led by their priests, and, abandoning themselves to the most frantic grief, endeavoured to give expression to their frenzy by orgiastic dances and the music of the flute and cymbal. Such abandonment to the most violent emotions in the obscurity of desert places could never have been without the greatest danger to the moral life. No doubt in the earliest period this ecstatic Nature-worship might be comparatively pure. But when war and commerce had brought the Phrygians into closer communication with the Assyrians, having a Nature-religion with features which strikingly resembled their own, they took over ideas and influences from the hot South of a terribly demoralizing character.

In his recent Hibbert Lectures Professor Sayce has given us a sketch of the old Accadian worship of Istar, and of its later developments in Babylonia and Phœnicia, which throws great light on the subject we are considering. In the old Accadian days, before Semitic influence had subordinated the feminine god to the male Baal, Nature-worship in Chaldæa would seem to have been almost as simple in form as in Phrygia itself. The Accadian goddess, who afterwards became in Semitic phrase Istar, was originally an independent deity, and called "the lady of the deep." Afterwards she was deemed the goddess of the evening star, and had her place beside the moon and sun gods. In the early Assyrian belief this astral deity stood even higher than Tammuz the sun-god, who was mainly worshipped as her bridegroom. There is a very early hymn which describes her descent into Hades to obtain the water of life for the

revival of the slain Tammuz. Professor Tiele has shown that this legend is but a thinly-veiled description of the earth-goddess seeking below for those hidden waters of life which shall cause the sun-god, and all Nature with him, to rise again from their sleep of death. Here, then, we find "the lady of the deep" and goddess of the evening star absorbing into herself the character and offices of the great earth-mother of the Phrygians. These ideas are certainly as early as Sargon, the first Semitic monarch of Babylonia; and it almost takes one's breath away to learn that the son of this Semitic successor of the old Accadian dynasties is shown by the monuments to have lived and reigned in 3750 B.C., or only 254 years after the supposed date of the Creation, according to the chronology of Usher. In the long centuries which followed, the myth of Istar travelled over many lands, and underwent not a few transformations in the countries to which it came. Istar became in Ionia the Artemis of Ephesus, with her warrior-priestesses, the Amazons. In Phœnicia she became Ashtoreth, in Hierapolis Semiramis; but wherever she went she was always represented as weeping for her slain bridegroom, the sun-god, under his different names, Adonis, Attys, or Tammuz. The more her original character was modified by Semitic influences the more subordinate did she become to the Baal or sun-god, and the more licentious and extravagant became the rites of her worship. "From Syria," says Professor Sayce, "the cult, with all its rites, made its way, like that of Attys-Adonis to the populations beyond the Taurus. At Komana, in Cappadocia, the goddess was ministered to by six thousand eunuch priests; and the Galli of Phrygia rivalled the priests of Baal and Ashtoreth in cutting their arms with knives, in scourging their backs, and in piercing their flesh with darts. The worship of the fierce powers of Nature, at once life-

giving and death-dealing, . . . produced alternate bursts of frenzied torture and frenzied lust."

But however licentious the later forms of the Istar worship might have become, there clearly was a time in the earlier Accadian history when, as Shamanism and Totemism gave way to the process of impersonation, the worship of Istar in Babylonia was as simple and austere a Nature-worship as that of Cybele among the Hittites and ancient Phrygians. The cults, indeed, resemble one another so closely that we cannot help suspecting a relation of dependence; and if one may venture to speculate, where history is as yet silent, it would seem far from improbable that the Hamitic inhabitants of old Chaldæa and the Hamitic tribes of Cappadocia were originally one people, with one simple conception of Nature and her life as their great goddess and her son. If the one cult were indeed derived from the other, we must look, I doubt not, for its origin to that Eridu, or Edin, at the ancient junction of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf, which was the main source of the Chaldæan idolatry from which Abram fled, and of those legends of the Flood which have so startling a resemblance to some of the early chapters of Genesis.

But you may ask: What historical assurance can we have that the ideas of this old Phrygian Nature-worship still retained their hold on the mind and imagination of the inhabitants of the Lycus Valley so many centuries after the destruction of Phrygian greatness? Conqueror after conqueror had swept over the land, Cimmerian, Lydian, Persian, and Gallic; overthrowing cities, shattering monuments, obliterating all traces of the ancient Phrygian wisdom and grandeur, and reducing the people to a base and hopeless slavery. How was it likely that the old religious ideas and feelings would survive the wreck of everything else?

Religious ideas, I answer, have a more tenacious hold than any which find place in the human mind; and they have proved themselves, a thousand times, to be stronger than kingly thrones, and harder than the brass of which kings construct their monuments. So was it in the present instance. Not only do we find that wave after wave of Phrygian religious influence swept over the Greek and Roman world, in spite of the satire of poets and the denunciation of philosophers, but that, as Mr. Ramsay remarks, "in the first centuries after Christ, no rites but those of Egypt and Phrygia retained much hold of the Græco-Roman world." The religions of Hellas had lost their soul. Men could no longer see nymphs in every stream, dryads in every oak, or oreads on every mountain. The tales of the gods were full of things which were disgusting or incredible to a secularized intellect. Men only pretended to believe in such things; and their worship, when it was paid, was nothing more than a concession to custom. But for all that, the religious instinct was not dead. It was deathless, in fact, as the human heart itself, and sought eagerly in every direction for satisfaction. Is it, then, so wonderful that at least the masses of mankind should have found what they sought in the comparatively simple Nature-cult of Phrygia, a cult already familiarized in the mysteries themselves? Or is it wonderful, again, that in an age weary of doubt, and tired of the monotonous, uninteresting round of a mere life of sense, men felt it a relief and a change to be caught up into the whirl of religious excitement produced by the worship of the Great Mother?

But if this were the case in the Græco-Roman world generally, how much more must it have been so in that particular part of it to which this worship was, so to speak, native; where its ideas and practices had been learnt from

childhood; and where its prevailing feeling had been stamped upon the very nature of the people by the hereditary influence of an immemorial past? The very history of Phrygia, therefore, would prepare us to find a people there predisposed to naturalism in thought and enthusiasm in feeling. And if the former tendency realized itself in Gnosticism, and the latter in Montanism with its ecstasies and asceticisms, that is nothing more than we should expect. For no form of religious thought or feeling which has been deeply fixed in mind and heart by custom and heredity, can die out speedily. You may superimpose upon it other forms of a different and even contradictory character—nobler, perhaps, in conception, and purer in force of moral appeal; but the old habitudes are not necessarily thereby eradicated. They lie latent in the mind, silently working and ready to start forth into violent activity on the application of the appropriate stimulus. It is the forgetfulness of this truth which has brought such undeserved reproach upon Christianity in the course of its historical realization. In the middle ages men were called Christians because they had taken the Christian name, and submitted to certain Christian rites; and then straightway whatever they did and said in their religious character was attributed to the religion which they had nominally embraced. Nothing could be more unfounded, nor more unjust. The old pagan feelings and habits of thought lurked behind the new beliefs, incessantly corrupting them, and not seldom breaking forth through their thin crust into utterly unchristian acts and expressions. So was it in New Zealand in our own days. The New Zealanders were said to be converted to Christianity; and so, in a sense, they were. They had gained new convictions, and lived, on the whole, under the impulse of a new spirit. But men forget that behind these there lay, only half-sub-

dued, the old savage impulses and superstitions, which burst forth at length into that horrible pagan reaction which almost broke Bishop Selwyn's heart. In like manner men are astonished to-day, but most unreasonably so, that the Hindoo deceit, begotten of ages of servile subjection, breaks out again and again, in spite of the restraints of Christian truth and purity, in newly-made converts. It is always dangerous and misleading to ignore facts; and it is a fact that, even under the powerful impulse of the Spirit of Christ, inherited feelings and beliefs require time for their complete eradication. Let us beware of this ourselves. Puritan narrowness is not to be overcome by one, or by a hundred, statements of broader and more salutary truth. Pagan superstitions die hard, even to-day, in many of our country villages. And there will be many an outbreak of Salvationism before the sweet reasonableness of the Gospel has quite expelled the blind passionateness of that religion of hysterical enthusiasm which brings so welcome a relief to the brutish monotony of an ignorant life. We shall not have studied in vain, then, the long course of the Nature-worships of ancient Phrygia and Babylonia, if they have pointed for us this salutary warning, and taught us to add the Divine patience and considerateness of our Great Master to His enthusiasm for purity and truth.

II.

I SHALL endeavour to-night to explain to you, as far as I may, the nature of the Colossian heresy.

St. Paul refers to it in such language as the following: "Beware lest there shall be any one that maketh spoil of you through his philosophy and vain deceit, according to the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ: . . . Let no one judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of a feast day or a new moon or a Sabbath day: which are a shadow of the things to come; but the body is Christ's. Let no man therefore rob you of your prize by a voluntary humility and worshipping of the angels, taking his stand upon the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind. . . . If ye died with Christ from the rudiments of the world, why, as if you lived in the world, have you rules laid down for you, 'Handle not, touch not, taste not,' according to the precepts and doctrines of men? which things indeed have a show of wisdom, in will-worship and humility and severity to the body, but are not of any value against the indulgence of the flesh."

In these expressions we find a reference to two elements of false teaching, and to an unchristian spirit in which that teaching is set forth. There is false theory, false practice, and a false spirit. The false theory is a theosophic inculcation of the worship of angels, an interposition of created mediators between God and man. The false practice is an effort to attain perfection by ascetic observances, by a frigid

formalism, and by severity to the body. And here we observe an element of Jewish influence. The formalism is Jewish formalism. It has respect to meats and drinks, to festivals and Sabbaths. Further, we perceive that these two elements, the Gentile theory and the Jewish practice, are inseparably blended. They evidently form part of the same system, and are equally important, in the mind of the creators and defenders of that system.

Once again, the spirit which animates this teaching is proudly exclusive. It has a show of wisdom, and its defenders are "vainly puffed up in their fleshly mind." They advance high claims to knowledge, they have a deposit of esoteric truth which they only impart to the initiated; looking, it would seem, upon ordinary believers as ignorant and unenlightened. The spirit of the system is that of an intellectual aristocracy, with its characteristic self-satisfaction and its disdain of everything which it thinks beneath it.

All this would seem to point to a semi-heathen system of speculation, adopted by Jewish Christians, and largely traversed with Jewish formalism and exclusiveness.

Now is it probable that there would be found in the Jewish Church at Colossæ, when our Epistle professes to have been written, Jewish converts who had embraced, and would be likely to propound, such a system of semi-pagan theosophy? There is little difficulty in giving a definite answer to that question. We know that Antiochus the Great transported two thousand Jewish families from Babylonia into Lydia and Phrygia. Phrygia especially seems to have possessed great attractions for Jewish settlers. Drawn thither by the fertility of the country and its thriving commerce, and not less perhaps by its life of luxury, the Jewish colony of the district of Laodicæa had increased so greatly that, about sixty years before Christ,

there were at the least (for this is a low estimate) eleven thousand adult freemen there, besides women and children. It follows very naturally that many of the wealthier and more cultured members of this Jewish colony had imbibed the philosophical and cosmological views of their heathen neighbours. The age was cosmopolitan. As early as the time of Alexander national barriers had been roughly beaten down by the sword of the conqueror; and the Macedonians, who had carried with them from Europe the thoughts and beliefs of the West, had brought back, on their return, not only the wares and luxuries, but also the strange superstitions and mystical Nature-cults, of the East. In the apostolic times, especially at such centres as Alexandria, Antioch, Ephesus, and the great cities of Phrygia, this confusing intermixture of heterogeneous religions, rites, and notions was at its height. Protected by the Roman peace, and stimulated by the love of gain, men of all the races of East and West met, traded, and argued in every noted mart of the empire. Thoughts ran along the Roman roads, as freely as merchants and couriers; and instead of the brooding originality of local thinkers the world had to be satisfied with the glitter of a superficial eclecticism.

Amongst the agents and intermediaries of this selective reconstruction, the most active, and not the least talented, were the Jews. This, as Mr. Ll. Davies remarks, was "something of a paradox." For both by their faith and civil policy the Jews were marked out as a separate and peculiar people. But, as the same writer acutely observes, "the Jewish intellect was more fertile than any other in new theosophic combinations," because "the depth and truth of this people's faith gave them an interest in whatever laid hold strongly of the convictions of other races." If, then, we find that they were Jews who first introduced

Gnostic speculations to the Church of Colossæ, this is no more than we might have been led to expect from our knowledge of the character of the Jewish mind, and of the historical connection of the Jewish people with Colossæ and its neighbourhood.

But it may be urged we are concerned here, not with Oriental mysticism in general, but with a fairly definite set of opinions and practices. Is there any reliable evidence, then, that the Jewish people of that age were likely to be gnostical in thought and ascetic in practice? In answer to this question Bishop Lightfoot has shown that the faith of the Jewish Essenes of our Lord's days presented these very peculiarities. While decrying generally the speculations of philosophers, the Essenes excepted those which treat of the existence of God and of the generation of the universe. They made a great secret of "the names of the angels," a phrase which points not obscurely to some such angelolatry and doctrine of emanations as those prevailing at Colossæ. In some sense also, though strict monotheists, they worshipped the sun, as a symbol, probably, of the unseen power which gives light and life. Again, they sought above all things to detach themselves from the ordinary conditions of physical life by ascetic abstinences. They avoided marriage, drank no wine, ate no animal food, refused, though Jews, to offer sacrifices, and held a doctrine of immortality which involved the final separation of the soul from the malignant and polluting contact of matter.

They had also, in addition to the peculiar doctrines and practices of the later Gnostics, their distinguishing spirit; possessing an esoteric doctrine which they jealously kept from the knowledge of all but the initiated, and avoiding all contact with the "men of the earth" as unclean and

defiling. It is not suggested that the gnostical innovators at Colossæ were actually Essenic missionaries from the lodges by the Dead Sea. But it is obvious that, if the Jews of Palestine had caught the infection of that spirit of Oriental mysticism which was in the air, it becomes easy to conceive that the members of the same race would be likely to feel its influence in such a country as Phrygia.

I endeavoured to show you last Sunday that the native faith of Colossæ and its neighbourhood was a simple Nature-worship. Nature was to the inhabitants of this region the Great Mother who poured into their lap the rich blessings of wealth and plenty. But she felt, it was supposed, the sharp suffering arising from drought and disease, pain and death. The prevalence of these natural evils, and the dark cloud which they cast over an otherwise bright existence, were dramatically represented in the wailing of the Great Mother for her slain son Sabazius. To bring themselves, then, into harmony with the sorrow of their deity, the Phrygian people invented religious ceremonies of which the principal features were a wild wailing, a frenzied cutting of the body, and a dark and austere asceticism. Their whole cult was, in truth, an elaborate representation of the night-side of Nature. How far, however, they had gone in the direction of dualism, in the impersonation of the hostile powers, and in the conception of antagonism between these and the Great Mother, we have no means of accurately ascertaining. But, as I tried to show you, there was a close relationship between the religions of Phrygia and Babylonia, a relation, if not of dependence, yet of such close affinity that, without much risk of error, we may illustrate that which is the less by that which is the better known of the two. Now Professor Sayce tells us that the cuneiform records enable us to

distinguish a decided evolution of dualism in the Babylonian religion.

"Nothing can show more plainly," he says, "the wide gulf which lies between the religions of pre-Semitic and of Semitic Chaldæa, than the contrast between the Zikum of Eridu, the mother of gods and men, and the wicked Tiamat of the legends, with her misshapen body and malignant mind. In the watery abyss, in which the first philosophers of Eridu saw the origin of all things, there was nothing unholy, nothing abhorrent. On the contrary, it was the home and mother of the great god Ea, the primal source of his wisdom and of his benevolence towards men. But the watery abyss personified by the Tiamat of the poems belongs altogether to another category. It represents all that is opposed to the present orderly course of the universe; it stands outside of, and in opposition to, the gods of heaven, and is thus essentially evil. Not only has the problem of the origin of evil presented itself to the Babylonian: he has found a solution of it in his dragon of chaos. Elsewhere the same author says, in respect to this Babylonian attempt to solve the problem of evil: "The divine powers which he worshipped had once been alike the creators of good and evil, like the powers of Nature which they represented. They had at once been beneficent and malevolent. By degrees these two aspects of their character came to be separated. The higher gods came to be looked upon as the hearers of prayer and givers of good gifts, while the instruments of their vengeance and the inflicters of suffering and misery upon man were the inferior spirits of the lower sphere. But the old conception which derived both good and evil from the same source did not wholly pass away. Evil never came to be regarded as the antagonist of good, it was rather its necessary com-

plement and minister. In his combat with the dragon of the chaos Merodach summons the evil wind itself to his assistance; and in the legend of the assault of the seven wicked spirits upon the moon-god, they are still called the messengers of Anu their king. The powers of darkness are degraded from their ancient position of independence, and either driven, like Tiamat, beyond the bounds of the created world, or reduced to the condition of ministers of the divine wrath."

You will easily perceive in the evolution of this idea of evil three stages. First, the greater gods are the cause of both good and evil; secondly, the evil phenomena of the world are assigned to distinct deities of a malignant nature; thirdly, those malignant deities are subordinated to the good gods and become their ministers, occupying very much the position of the Satan of the Book of Job. Now I think that this discovery throws new and unexpected light on the growth of the elementary Gnosticism of the Epistle to the Colossians. When we remember the shape which the Gnosticism of Asia Minor took in the hands of Cerinthus, before the end of the first century, there can be little doubt that the angels worshipped by the gnostical Christians at Colossæ were so many mediators, interposed between God and matter, to make the creation of so evil a thing the more tolerable in conception. The difficulty which they felt is obvious. How could they conceive that matter, the vehicle and instrument of all pain and lust, came directly from the hand of God? Some distance must be interposed between things so different. Some intermediaries must be provided to make such a descent conceivable. Accordingly there came into men's minds the peculiarly Gnostic idea of emanation. As Bishop Lightfoot puts it, "the Divine Being germinates as it were." And this first germination produces

a second, which in its turn becomes the source of many succeeding ones, the Divine element growing weaker in each successive germination. At length contact with matter becomes possible, and there ensues creation. In the system of Cerinthus Christ was one of these emanations, and the Demiurge, or world-Creator, another. This Demiurge was utterly ignorant of the existence of the original Deity, and therefore there can be little wonder if many of the Mosaic laws proceeding, as the Gnostics held, from the Demiurge are contrary to the Divine will. These imaginary mediators between God and matter still retain the Jewish name of angels in the system of Cerinthus, and so point back to the ideas which stood behind the angel-worship at Colossæ. But how came those ideas to have obtained a footing in that city at so early a period as the middle of the first century? This is the problem which commentators upon this Epistle have hitherto found so puzzling.

It has been usual to point to the influence of the faith of ancient Persia, Zoroastrianism. I cannot doubt that Zoroastrianism exercised a powerful influence both in Babylonia and Asia Minor, for both these countries were long under the Persian dominion. Still there is a fundamental difference between the later faith of Persia and that of the Christian Gnostics. The Persian religion occupied a position towards the problem of evil which was, so to speak, the more logical. Though not in the Zend-Avesta, yet in the Persian religion of the age of Darius, that which was known to Asia Minor, the evil principle was absolutely independent of the good one. Angro-Mainyus, the head of the cosmical dominion of evil, fought on well-nigh equal terms against Ahura-Mazda, the creator and ruler of the dominion of truth.

Now this position was never assumed by Gnosticism, even in its most developed forms. Always in it the creator of evil was an emanation, at whatever distance, from the good God. He might be ignorant of his Divine Originator, might even be antagonistic to Him, but still he was never without something of His essence, nor ever entirely free from His dominion. This was a conception radically different from the sharp and fundamental dualism of Persia. The one could never have been derived from the other. Whence, then, shall we say that the Colossian heresy derived its characteristic form and contents? I believe that our recently attained knowledge of the Babylonian religion enables us to give a very probable answer to this question. I showed you last Sunday evening that the ancient worship of the Turanians of Asia Minor had a very close affinity to that of the old Turanians of Chaldæa. Now in Asia Minor, in the empire of the Hittites, this worship retained its independence for thousands of years after it had been profoundly modified in Chaldæa by the Semitic conquest of that country. We ought not, then, to be astonished when we find that the earth-mother of Phrygia in Roman days is far nearer to the Zikum of ancient Eridu, or Edin, than the Istar of Semitic Babylonia. Istar was Zikum reduced to subordination by the Semitic feeling of the supremacy of Baal, the sun-god. No doubt, after the Assyrian conquest of the Hittites, the worship of the great mother of Phrygia was modified to some extent by the Semitic cult of Istar. But this modification, however far it went, would be in the direction, not of the Persian independence, but of the Semitic subordination of the ancient mother-goddess. The same process had no doubt proceeded to some extent also among the Jews, during and after their captivity in Babylonia and Assyria. They had there been made

acquainted with the kindred Semitic ideas about the generation of evil in the later stage of their evolution. The dragon and evil spirits of Babylonia have a distinct resemblance to the Satan and serpent of the Old Testament. They are subordinate to the Supreme God, and though in general hostile to Him, are made unwillingly the ministers of His designs. When, therefore, the Jewish converts of St. Paul's days introduced into the Colossian Church the idea of angelic mediators, as intermediaries between the good God and the evil phenomena of the world, they introduced ideas which were far from being strange or unfamiliar either to the Jewish or Gentile members of the Church at Colossæ. We thus obtain, I think, a very probable account of the genesis at once of these ideas, and of the influences which gave them their ready acceptance.

It may sound strange, perhaps, to say that the Christian religion itself was likely to have under such circumstances a very powerful part in stimulating such speculations. But a moment's consideration will suffice, I think, to show the reasonableness of such a supposition. For the more the idea of God was cleared of obscuring and degrading Pagan suggestions, the more ethical that idea became, the more righteousness took in it the place of power, and paternal love of natural capriciousness, the more intolerable must the thought have seemed, to those who looked upon matter as the source of lust and suffering, that God had been the direct Creator of matter. How could the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ have created that which was believed to be the universal basis of sin and pain? Such was the question which, in the atmosphere of old Phrygian thought, would inevitably be suggested to Jews who had imbibed the modified dualism of Assyria.

I fear, too, that amongst these Jewish speculators there

was another and a less worthy motive. Six or seven years before the date of the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul, as we have seen, had fought a great battle with the Judaizing Christians of the Church of Galatia, who had required Gentiles to be circumcised and to keep the Law of Moses. It was, perhaps, the fiercest and most momentous battle which was ever fought in the world in defence of Christian liberty. On its issue it depended whether men should be saved by law or by grace: whether the Christian Church should dwindle into a Jewish sect, or should become the religious home of the world. St. Paul triumphed; but at such a cost of labour and anxiety as was never paralleled even in his ministry of continued toil and care. Can we suppose, then, that Jewish bitterness and exclusiveness would suffer themselves to be extinguished by a single defeat, however decisive? Nay, may it not seem at first sight not a little unnatural that, so soon after that first fierce conflict, we should hear so little as we do, in an Epistle directed against Jewish errors, of the claims of circumcision, or of the necessity of the law to salvation? So it might seem, until we give the matter a little careful consideration. But do we not see every day how soon public interest subsides in a question which has been irreversibly decided? Who cares anything now about the contention so hotly debated a few years ago, in respect to the Oath or Declaration of Members of Parliament? The question of Electoral Reform, again, once excited the whole country to a pitch of passion almost unprecedented; but who cared to speak of it a few years after its final settlement? So was it with the question of the equality of Jews and Gentiles in the Church, when once that question had been finally settled by the enormous increase in the number of Gentile Churches, and by the authority of the Apostles. At the same time the acute

remark of Professor Salmon is worthy of notice, that in the twin Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians there are plain indications that this dispute had not been long decided. We take it as a matter of course that we have as much right to every Christian privilege as the children of Abraham. But to St. Paul when he wrote these Epistles, "this truth is no mere matter of course, but an amazing paradox. He is still astonished beyond measure, as he contemplates the mystery of Christ, that the Gentiles should be fellow-heirs and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel." In other words, the great controversy about the claims of the law and of the Jew had only just been decided.

But the Epistle to the Colossians shows us that the spirit of Jewish exclusiveness which had aroused that former controversy was neither dead nor disposed to confess itself finally defeated. If it could not attain its ends by asserting the claims of an exclusive law, it would endeavour to reach the same goal by claiming the possession of a superior wisdom. The Jew would be satisfied if only by some means he could set himself above the Gentile, if either by means of law, or of gnosis, he could vindicate his claim to superior privilege, and so break down the universality of the Gospel. Accordingly we find that in the Epistle to the Colossians St. Paul has to change his line of defence. "It is no longer," as Bishop Lightfoot well points out, "against national, but against intellectual, exclusiveness that he contends. It is not against the Jew as such, but against the Jew become Gnostic, that he fights the battle of religious liberty." The signs of it are evident in every page of our Epistle, in the strenuousness with which he claims to "warn every man, and teach every man in every wisdom, that he may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus." There is

no intellectual aristocracy in the Church, sharply distinguished from the common herd of believers by the possession of special knowledge. Every kind of knowledge is the property of every man, and perfection is to be attained not by the favoured few, but by the believing many. It is in Christ that are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, and to them every man may obtain access who outwardly in baptism, and inwardly by faith, comes into Christ, lives in Christ, and follows Christ. Christianity is not an order, with its inner circle of mystagogues and its outer circle of devotees; but a brotherhood of spiritual equals, all finding one another in Christ, all teaching and helping one another by the power of the same Spirit. No matter what difficulties may be presented by the evil which is in the world, or by the sin which is in the heart of man, we are not to seek the solution of these difficulties by denying the common Headship of Christ or the universal brotherhood of believers. These are great positive facts, and we are not to relax our hold upon them because it may be hard to reconcile them with certain phenomena in the world and in the Church.

What is the real relation between these phenomena and those truths it will be my endeavour to point out in my remaining lectures; but meantime let us not fail to learn, from the example of the Colossian Christians, how dangerous a thing it may be to endeavour to explain the difficulties of life from the resources of our own reason alone. Our being is more than our thought. The contents of our knowledge begin in sensations which we experience, but cannot explain. The processes of our reasoning begin with axioms which we are obliged to affirm, but cannot prove. How we have become such as we are, with just such a natural constitution and such capacities of thought, will, and emotion as we possess, is a mystery entirely hidden from us. We must be

satisfied to know the facts. Much more is our intellect at fault when, passing beyond the contents of consciousness, it endeavours to comprehend the real things from which we derive our impressions. Who can tell what those real elements of being are at which we throw out the names Matter and Force? Who can prove the objective existence of time and space, of an eternal world and of God? If, indeed, our intuitions are to be trusted, we have a firm conviction that such things exist. But such proof of their existence as will satisfy the understanding we have none to give. In a word, being is vaster than our finite intelligence, and is not to be embraced within its categories. If, therefore, the world and man's life should present to us some mysteries of which we can give no rational solution, this is no more than we ought to expect. No doubt we are bound to do our utmost to reach a reasonable explanation of every object of our thought. It is to this effort that the gift of reason was intended to stimulate us. It is to this effort, never ending, always renewed after every failure, that we owe much of our use and happiness. But let us beware of rashness and arrogance; let us beware of the folly of rejecting the deepest truths of revelation and spiritual experience because we cannot readily range them in the ranks of our logical conclusions. They may be truths of so vast a scope that the limits of our thought are too narrow to entertain them. They may only seem to us to be imperfect because the curve which marks the limits of their domain is too vast to be discerned by us in its determining elements. They may seem to be out of harmony with our conclusions at certain points, because that ultimate harmony involves elements of thought too intricate and multitudinous to be brought by us within a single field of vision. The problem of evil, whether in the world or in man's life, may well

require for its solution the application of some of those transcendent truths. God may, for instance, be Omnipotent Love, and evil a necessary incident of our finite existence; while yet we cannot so connect these facts by links of reason as to make their co-existence comprehensible. We are not, however, on that account to be impatient, or to deny rashly either of the facts because we cannot discern the link of their rational connection. Let us remember humbly the limitation of our powers; and, where they plainly fail us, learn to wait and be patient.

Is it not enough for us to know, on the testimony of Him who is more to us than reason, that God is a loving Father; that He has revealed His heart and mind to us in the Incarnation of His Son; that in Christ we have life, and that He is the sole and sufficient Mediator between us and Heaven? Is it reasonable to deny these most certain facts of our spiritual experience because they seem to be inconsistent with some other facts not more certain than themselves? Remember the solemn words of St. Paul: "Let no man rob you of your prize, taking his stand upon the things which he hath seen, vainly puffed up in his fleshly mind, and not holding the Head." Let us hold fast to Christ whom we know, who lives within our soul, who reveals Himself to us as Son of God and Mediator; and let us be sure that, whatever disclosures await us in this world or the next, nothing will ever shame us for this constant faith. What is doubt, so long as Christ is mine? What is earthly darkness, so long as I am filled with the heavenly light? Yea, what even is evil, so long as the Spirit of Jesus dwells within me, with regenerating power? This narrow scene of battling light and shade is not the whole of life. A brighter sun shall rise, a larger day shall dawn, and then with widening powers and prospects the mists and shadows of the time-life shall haply flee away.

III.

We saw last Sunday evening that the Colossian heresy was a system of modified dualism, having its inspiration in the difficulty felt by Christian men in attributing to a God of Love the creation of sin and pain. Evil they saw was twofold, it was moral and natural: the evil which springs from a selfish will, and that which springs from the constitution of the universe. These difficulties are by no means the same, and thus it will be convenient for us to enquire, in the two lectures which remain, how St. Paul treated the Gnostical teaching on each of them.

To-night our question is: How did St. Paul treat that part of the teaching of the Gnostical Christians of Colossæ which was inspired by their perception of natural evil? They taught that matter was the seat and source of this evil; and to account for the creation of a thing so unblest as matter they imagined a series of emanations from God, which they called angels or messengers, each of these in succession losing something of the Divinity of his Source, until at length a Demiurge, or world-Creator, was developed who was sufficiently undivine to bring matter into existence.

In this way they certainly diminished the difficulty of conceiving that a God of love created natural evil, but at the same time (probably without intending it) they challenged the claim of Christ to be the sole Mediator between God and man; and they adopted an idea of the nature and source of evil which led them to misconceive its remedy. If

matter were its source, then, clearly, an ascetic separation from everything material must be its cure. And thus the redemption of mankind from evil was made to depend, not on the communication of Christ's new life, but on mere bodily abstinence, on a thoroughgoing asceticism which combined the celibacy of the monk with modern vegetarianism and total abstinence.

Now how did the Apostle deal with these new opinions? Not as we do, by considering their possible reasonableness, or the nature of the objections which they were intended to obviate, but by confronting them with those truths of the Christian faith with which they came into collision. His argument is shortly this: "I know that the Gospel of Christ is true. I know it historically, experimentally, and by the special teaching of the Holy Ghost. What, then, contradicts its fundamental verities must be false. But your system of angelic emanations and bodily austerities does contradict those fundamental verities. Therefore it is false, and to be rejected by all true believers. There is no such evolved Demiurge as you imagine: for He 'who is the image of the invisible God' is also the Firstborn of all creation; for in Him were all things created, in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible (things material as well as things spiritual), whether, to adopt your language, they be thrones or dominions or principalities or powers—all things (matter included) have been created through Him and unto Him (through His power and unto the furtherance of His designs), and 'in Him all things hold together,' continuing in Him even as they originated from Him." St. Paul will have no dualism. He will tolerate no rival to his Master on the mediatorial throne. Christ is all, and in all; matter is His not less than spirit; and redemption is to be had, not in separation from matter, but in

communion with Him. Thus the whole Gnostical heresy is torn up by the roots, dualism is discarded, and the unity of the Godhead is affirmed in scorn of all consequences. I think one may say without fear that this theology of St. Paul is the only theology which can be consistent with the discoveries of modern science. With such truths before us as the constancy of the quantity of matter, the conservation of energy, the identity of the material in sun and earth and stars, the vast scope and range of cosmical laws, and the transference even of forms of life from planet to planet, we see that the universe is a unity, and that if it had an Author it could have no more than one. As Mr. Cox has truly said: "There may be one God, that to science is an open question; but more than one there cannot be; that question is closed, and science herself stands to guard the way to it, with a drawn sword in her hand."

But now, do you see what you have done? some may be ready to answer. Do you not see that, by agreeing with what you call the common conclusion of St. Paul and science, you have brought back the whole terrible problem of natural evil upon us, with all its tormenting and unresolved contradictions? Yes, I know that I have, but what then? Is it not better to face a difficulty than to accept a false solution of it? Nay, even on the lower ground of utility, is it not better to have a Living, Omnipotent Saviour, the Lord of earth and heaven, of good and evil, than battling gods in the heaven above and on the earth beneath, with some false alleviation of a difficulty?

Yes, but I may be asked, "How are you going to deal with that difficulty which, like a horrible monster, stands with threatening roar before the gates of the moral Paradise?" I acknowledge that the difficulty is a formidable one, and that it has lost none of its terrors for the strongest thinkers of

modern days. One of the latest and one of the most popular works of German philosophy, Von Hartmann's "Philosophy of the Unconscious," is little else than a long exhibition of the proofs of natural evil. As, however, our own great thinker, J. S. Mill, must be better known to you, and as he states the revulsion of a keen moral sense against the manifold evils of the world as strongly as possible, it may be convenient to present our difficulty in his own vivid words. He sees Nature as the Poet Laureate did, "red everywhere in tooth and claw." "If," says he, "there be any marks at all of special design in creation, one of the things most evidently designed is that a large proportion of all animals should pass their existence in tormenting and devouring other animals. They have been lavishly fitted out with the instruments necessary for that purpose, their strongest instincts impel them to it, and many of them seem to have been constructed incapable of supporting themselves by any other food." Such is the impression received in the world of life. If now we turn to the inorganic forces of Nature, do we find the prospect more inviting? No, says Mr. Mill; there matters are, if possible, worse. "A single hurricane destroys the hopes of a season; a flight of locusts, or an inundation, desolates a district; a trifling chemical change in an edible root starves a million of people. Everything, in short, which the worst men commit, either against life or property, is perpetrated on a larger scale by natural agents." It would hardly be possible to draw a stronger indictment against the actual order of Nature, or to feel and express a deeper horror at the spectacle which that order presents. In ruder days, when, as hunters, men slew their own food, and even worshipped by means of animal sacrifices, the spectacle of death was so common that it scarcely attracted notice. And even if floods and storms, famines or

earthquakes, shook men's souls and desolated their homes, it was so easy for them to conceive the existence of maleficent gods, that a plausible explanation of such calamities was found without difficulty. But now, when the idea of many gods has become impossible, and almost equally so the conception of any God but one of love; when a worship devoid of sacrifices, and a horror of causing misery and death have created the habit, almost the instinct, of merciful feeling; we cannot listen to such an enumeration of horrors as Mr. Mill sets before us, without an inward shrinking and moral revulsion. We, too, ask, as the Colossian heretics asked of old, Can the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ do all this? And if not, by whom or by what is it done? By accident it cannot be; for whatever else it may be, this universe is at least a universe of order, and the days do but multiply as they pass the proofs of the existence of a Presiding Mind. But is that Mind Omnipotent? Is it able to impose its will upon all its creatures? or may we suppose some limitations to God's power imposed by hostile will or intractable materials? We cannot laugh this ancient idea of the Christian Gnostics out of court, for it has actually seemed possible to one of the foremost of our thinkers.

Hume, in his "Dialogues concerning Natural Religion," makes the representative of orthodoxy concede that the Divine beneficence, though it be guided by wisdom, is yet limited by necessity. Whereupon the sceptic retorts that, "if we take the world as it is, we should rather regard it as the first attempt of a God who is a novice, or as the weak production of a God who had grown old; indeed, even the idea of a plurality of makers, who had been counterworking each other, might have something to say for itself." Mr. Mill, speaking, however, with far more reverence, thinks that dualism, at least, may have a good deal to say for

itself. Three essays of his on Religion were published after his death. In the two former of these he only suggests dualism as a possible hypothesis. In the first he says: "It may be possible to believe with Plato that perfect goodness, limited and thwarted in every direction by the intractableness of the material, has done this because it could do no better." In the second essay he says: "It is possible to hold a belief which regards Nature and Life, not as the expression throughout of the character and purpose of the Deity, but as the product of a struggle between contriving goodness and an intractable material, as was believed by Plato, or a principle of evil, as was the doctrine of the Manichæans." In the third essay, however, written more than ten years later, and containing his own mature ideas upon this subject, Mr. Mill rejects the idea of a principle of evil, and adopts that of the limitation of God's power by an intractable material; with the alternative that perhaps the evil consequences arose less from the hindrance of the material than from defect in the skill of the Creator. Thus we are left with a decided dualism, having on the one side a God of great but not unbounded power and wisdom, and on the other an intractable matter which He did not create, and cannot wholly adapt to His purposes.

A very remarkable work, entitled "The Gospel of a Poor Soul," which was published about fifteen years ago at Leipsic, approaches the problem of evil in another way. It makes God and the world absolutely independent of one another, God not even striving, as in the hypothesis of Mr. Mill, to subordinate the world to His purposes. It may be said to be a form of Gnosticism, such as naturally develops itself in the mind of a Christian of the present day who holds a materialistic theory about the nature of the world. In it, God is represented as the Personal Love who gives Himself

to the pious heart for its help and comfort. But though religion knows this God as her God, she does not recognise in Him the Creator of the world. With the world, indeed, either in its origin or its order, He has nothing to do. The world is nothing but a mechanism of blindly-concurring forces. By accident, but by accident alone, the movements of this mechanism are favourable to those who love and follow God. God foresaw that this would be so, and He reveals the fact to those who love Him; though it was not brought about by His pre-arrangement. The world is independent of God, and God of the world. No doubt this theory removes from the Creator the reproach of all that natural evil over which pessimists make their moan; but then, on the other hand, how can we ever reasonably co-ordinate the ideas which it puts before us? How can we think of a God who is infinite activity remaining an idle spectator of the immeasurable activities of the universe? Or even if we could think this unthinkable thing, how could we ever thus find satisfaction for the wants of our heart? We need a God who can restrain our will in the midst of sensuous allurements, and who can restore the force which we have lost by selfish indulgence. And how can such restraint be exercised, or such redemption accomplished, by a God who has no contact with the world and no control of its forces?

Weisse and Rothe, two modern German philosophers, have so far modified this idea as to make God the Creator of matter, without becoming its Omnipotent Ruler and Orderer. "Matter," says Weisse, "as the externalized will of God, has come to be in conflict with His personal will;" and God cannot terminate this conflict at once by a mere exercise of volition, but can only transform the hostile element gradually, in the course of history. Matter is called

by Rothe the non-Ego of God. It is the source of all that is felt in the world as evil. But in a sense its existence is a necessity. Its removal, and with it the evil which it carries, can only be effected by God's introducing into it the spirituality of His Ego. This, however, will be a long and tedious, nay unending, process; for after all Divine efforts there will always remain over a kind of slag of untransformed matter, a residuum not disposed of, which necessitates an endless series of new world-creations. Here, again, we have the vicious dualism of the early Gnostics, refined, indeed, in form, but by no means abolished; for God is conceived in both systems to have evolved from Himself, by the process of emanation, an element which is outside Him and beyond His control. There is something in this world of speculation which limits God, which defies Him, and which is not subordinated to that Divine Word by whom and unto whom all things were created.

Drobisch, another German philosopher, tries to bring this intractable matter into closer relation to God, by conceiving it to consist of a number of what he calls "independent reals," originally contained in God, but gaining a certain independence by going forth from Him. It is in this their independence that they have developed what we call natural evil. Still, they remain connected with God by means of certain mediating existences (as the Gnostics thought), whether those existences be conceived as analogous to nerves or angels, or something else. But here again the unity of God is sacrificed in an effort to explain the existence of evil; and, in point of fact, more difficulties are created than are removed. For if these imaginary reals be independent of God's control, how are we to explain the order which we see in the world? or how, again, is the world to be deli-

vered from evil if the sources of evil have escaped partially or wholly from the direct sway of Divine Love?

I have laid all these attempted solutions of the problem of evil before you that you may the better understand its difficulties, and apprehend at once the importance of the Colossian heresy, and of St. Paul's decided rejection of the apparently easy escape of dualism. Still, it is not to be forgotten that the more decidedly we reject dualism the more irrevocably we pledge ourselves to give some tolerable account of the difficulty which is thus aggravated. If God be the sole Creator, if matter even be the work of His hand, how are we to reconcile the creative activity of love with the creaturely development of evil? I will endeavour, so far as I can, to give some answer to this inevitable question.

Natural evil exhibits itself, as we know, in two separate provinces of creation, that of organic instinct and that of inorganic matter; and it will thus be necessary to consider the peculiar difficulties presented by each.

First, it is objected that animals are subjected to pain, fear, torture, and death; nay, that many of them are so constituted that they cannot live without inflicting these evils on one another. I observe, first, on such representations as these (especially when made by thoroughgoing pessimists), that they mislead by suppression. All the light and joy of Nature are left out; and the effect is just the same as if you were to obliterate all the lights of a picture and leave nothing on the canvas but its shadows. The pessimist refuses to see all the lively gestures of animal delight. He will not hear the gay carolling of the birds, nor feel their natural joy in the bright air and the balmy sunlight. He will not, again, perceive the chief cause of their happiness, that it is not in any rational aim and purpose which they

have, but simply in their work and movement, in the congenial exercise of their natural faculties. Man's forecast of fear and danger never troubles them. They enjoy the present as if the world held no foe and the morrow no threatening. In one passage of his last essay Mr. Mill remarks this, observing that "the mere play of the faculties is a never-ending source of pleasure," and that "this pleasure when experienced seems to result from the normal working of the machinery, while pain usually arises from some external interference with it." Still, he is not satisfied that any such interference should take place, and asks why Omnipotence could not prevent it? We must beware here, I reply, of the ambiguity which lurks in the word Omnipotence. Omnipotence in God does not mean power to do anything, but only to do anything which does not involve a contradiction in reason. God cannot lie, nor can He make contradictions agree. Bearing this in mind, then, I would ask you if the law of progress is on the whole a good law? Is it likely to produce the richest variety of finite life? Does it offer to such life a better hope of enjoyment than the monotonous sameness of unvarying form? Does it furnish the best conceivable stimulus to that effort which is joy? If these and the like questions be answered in the affirmative, then surely it is not only conceivable, but probable, that God should make this the law of His Creation. But then if He did so He must Himself comply with its condition. The law limits the work. To progress, successively improving generations of creatures are a necessary postulate; and it follows hence that there must be death. But if there must be death, in what form, let us ask, could it best come? By the slow decay of sickness, which to a beast means the slow agony of starvation; or like a flash in the stroke of the hawk or the tiger? To the victim surely

the latter is the more merciful method; while to the slayer, which is without man's sensitive sympathy with pain, no moral deterioration is involved in the act of slaughter. That men should love to kill, that men should deliberately deaden their minds to the sufferings of the panting and frightened creatures which they hunt, is quite a different matter. Man has no business to be like the tiger; and if, by blunting his moral sensibility, he reduces himself to the level of a beast of prey, beyond all doubt he becomes the author of his own moral deterioration. In the case of the beasts, however, it must be obvious to everyone that the natural method of inflicting death is the most merciful which we can conceive.

Yes, but we are reminded that there is another department of natural evil in which our recoil from the spectacle of pain is reinforced by a sense of moral unfitness. We see that Nature inflicts pain and death upon moral beings with an absolutely brutal disregard of their moral quality. And it is simply for this reason that Mr. Mill has spoken of her as if she were immoral. "Nature," he urges, "kills. She does this once to every being that lives. She burns, crushes, starves, poisons, tortures by slow agony; and she does all this with the most supercilious disregard both of mercy and of justice, emptying her shafts upon the best and noblest indifferently with the meanest and worst. In sober truth," he adds, "nearly all the things which men are hanged or imprisoned for doing to each other are Nature's everyday performances." Now, all this simply means that, as before man came into existence, natural changes take place, not with a view to our moral condition, but with a view to the general stability of natural order. So far, then, as man is corporeal, and therefore a part of Nature, he comes under the laws of their occurrence. Would those, we may well ask, who

object to the occasional consequences of this regularity desire its discontinuance? Do they think that a world where these physical changes accommodated themselves accurately to the millionfold caprices of man's moral states would be a better world for us than that in which we live? In such a world there would be no law, no regularity; we could not predict to-day what would happen to-morrow. The forces of Nature, following the caprices of man, would elude our intelligence and escape from our control; and man would become once more as much the slave of Nature as he was in the days of his barbarian ignorance. Was it well, I ask again, for God to give to Nature that unvarying order which should enable us to use and master her? Then is it absurdly unreasonable in us to ask God to make Nature at once regular and irregular, absolutely uniform in her changes, and at the same time sensitively responsive to every moral change in ourselves. Does not the grotesque absurdity of such a demand make itself obvious at once, as soon as we descend to details? When the stones of that tower in Siloam fell, is it soberly demanded that they should have had given to them a miraculous power of discriminating the moral qualities of those who happened to be beneath them, so as to spare the good and crush the bad? Or, when a man treads upon a snake, is it a reasonable requirement that the snake should have given to it a miraculous power of discerning whether the foot which hurts it is that of a good or evil man, so that it may bite the evil and spare the good? Does not the very form of such questions demonstrate their folly? It is for the good of all God's creatures (men included) that the course of Nature should be uniform. And if in some circumstances that uniformity should threaten us with pain and death, what is the lesson which that fact should teach us? To

murmur at God and blaspheme Nature? Nay, rather so to act upon our knowledge of that uniformity as to avoid such danger in time to come. An earthquake or a volcano may no doubt destroy a city. But what then? Shall we demand the abolition of those subterranean forces, which, as we now know, have their salutary ends to serve? Or shall we not rather take care in the future not to build our cities in the paths of volcanic vibrations? These natural accidents, as they are called, are comparatively rare, and will become still rarer as the labour of human thought and observation goes on.

Can you not see, then, how foolish it is to use the language of moral intention in respect to that which can have no such intention? Nature cannot be im-moral because she is un-moral. Man's law is an "ought to be;" and if knowing what ought to be he does the opposite he is clearly guilty. Nature's law, on the contrary, is a must be; and therefore she can do neither right nor wrong in following it. If, then, Nature's proceedings can form no rule for man, must it not be equally true that to apply language to her proceedings which implies moral intent can only be misleading?

Nor can such language be fitly transferred to the Great Author of Nature. If He bound Nature fast in the iron links of law, this was not only for the sake of securing her stability, but also for our advantage. And to ask God to continue that advantage while He abolishes it, to subject Nature to an unvarying order while He makes it follow the arbitrary variations of man's free will, is to ask God to reconcile contradictions, to do a thing impossible in its own nature, and therefore as impossible to God as to man.

What men forget in most of their speculations about evil is this patent truth, that since finite things have their limits,

which, by excluding other finite things, give them peculiar qualities and constitutions, God cannot deal with them as if they had no such special qualities. All which we can reasonably expect is, that in determining their relations to each other He shall minimize the inconveniences and disharmonies resulting from such relations. And that God does this, making the lights of life overpower its shadows, and the happiness of life preponderate over its pain, I think we may see written plainly across the whole vast record of creation.

It follows, of course, that most of the difficulties in regard to natural evil which are conjured up and paraded by pessimistic writers are manufactured difficulties. They arise partly from the limitation of our powers, partly from the lack of close and sustained thought, and partly, I fear I must add, from the inveterate prejudices of those who either through their fault or their misfortune have become habituated to a sceptical cast of thought.

Let me not, however, be thought either to undervalue these difficulties or to blame unduly those who have set them forth. Their persistent emergence in so many systems of religion, whether among Aryan or Semitic races; their reappearance, especially amongst Christians, in the Gnosticism of the second century, the Manichæanism of the fourth century, and the rationalism of mediæval Provence, all this shows that they have deep root in the very constitution of the human mind, and that they deserve and demand our very serious consideration. But still I think you will agree with me that a close and careful scrutiny tends rather to dispel than to confirm them; and that at any rate our modern Gnostics go beyond their right when they demand that we shall create for the solution of such difficulties a dualistic theory of the universe. Whatever befalls we must

still hold fast those fundamental truths with which such theorists were confronted by St. Paul in his Epistle to the Colossians. There is but one God, and one Mediator between God and man, the Man Christ Jesus. He is the Head of all principalities and powers, the Image of the Invisible God, the Firstborn of all creation. All things were made through Him and unto Him, and in Him are all things held together. If there be evil in the world, natural or moral, it is not without His knowledge and permission; and not also, as I shall try to show you in my next lecture, without His gracious interference for its abolition. Daring as it may sound, we must still say with Isaiah, in God's name: "I am Jehovah, and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness. I make peace and create evil. I am Jehovah that doeth all these things." Easy as it seems to clear God of all responsibility for sin and pain, by affirming the existence of an independent Author of Evil, we must resist the temptation to do so, and at any cost of mental labour or moral pain affirm again and again Jehovah is El-Shaddai, God Almighty; and "whatever is done upon earth He doeth it Himself." Only thus can our God become our Saviour: "a very present Help in time of trouble."

IV.

Last Sunday evening we considered the objections to the Divine government of the world which arise out of the existence of natural evil. To-night we are to pursue a similar line of investigation in respect to the existence of moral evil.

We have found that the Colossian heretics went astray mainly because they misconceived the source and seat of evil. They made evil physical, finding its origin and impulse in a matter which, if not independent of God, was directly under the control of beings far removed from Him in will and wisdom. If, then, evil was to be banished by human effort, it must be by withdrawing as far as possible from all contact with matter, by fleshly abstinence, and severities to the body. These practices we found were ethically valueless, because they were based on a doctrine which was speculatively untrue. True evil, namely moral evil, is neither physical nor metaphysical. We are not evil because we have a material body liable to sickness, passionate disturbance, pain and death. Neither, again, are we evil, as some metaphysicians have taught, because we are finite. Finiteness may be defect as compared with infinity, but defect is something different in kind from wickedness. A creature may be of limited powers, and still morally good within his limitations. To call him evil because he is material or finite is to apply the language of moral intention to that which is, in its nature, non-moral.

It is to abuse language, and manufacture difficulties. Moral evil can only arise in a will which is free to choose between two courses, the one opposed to the law of the creaturely constitution, and the other in accordance therewith. We have such a will, and it requires but little reflection to convince ourselves that it is the ordinance of our Creator that we should act under the impulse and direction of love in all our relations to God and man. If, then, knowing and feeling this, we deliberately choose to be selfish rather than loving, we become evil, and fall under the dominion of guilt and sinful desire.

But now, if we agree to this definition of moral evil, it becomes necessary to acknowledge that the whole world lies in wickedness. All human wills choose to do wrong in greater or less degree; the whole human race, in other words, has rebelled against the law of its Creator, and has incurred all the terrible consequences of such disobedience, as remorse, pain, aversion from God, and continually increasing moral depravation.

But why, it may be asked, if God be the Omnipotent Ruler and Creator of mankind, did He permit this? Suppose that we acquit Him, as in reason we must, of all active participation in this rebellion against His own laws, why yet, it is asked, did God create man free when He must have foreseen all the terrible consequences of freedom? This is really the question which lurks at the heart of all that loudly expressed dissatisfaction with the present constitution of the world of which I gave you specimens last week.

Let us then endeavour, as best we may, to see what real weight and meaning there are in this question. It contains in effect two accusations against the Almighty Maker of man, first, that He gave to His creature a free will; and

secondly, that by establishing the law of heredity, or of transmission of qualities, He made it certain that evil having once obtained a place in our volitional habits, would be indefinitely spread and perpetuated.

Our first question is: Why did God make moral evil a possibility? Because, I reply, He could not create a being free from the constraint of instinct, without leaving that possibility open. Either, then, God must have restrained the ascent of being upon the earth within the low limits of instinct; either He must have prevented it from rising to the lofty level of moral consciousness; or He must have left the choice of evil a possibility. Had it been better, then, if God had refrained from impressing on men the image of His own Divine Freedom? We will suffer Rousseau to answer that question. "To murmur," he says, "because God does not hinder man from doing evil, is to murmur because He made him of an excellent nature, and attached to his actions the moral character which ennobles them. . . . What! in order to prevent man from being wicked must he needs be confined to instinct and made a brute? No, God of my soul, never will I reproach Thee for having made it in Thine own image, that I might be free, good, and happy like Thyself." Let it be admitted, if you will, that freedom means a possible fall, nay, that freedom is in itself in some sort a temptation, seeing that he who feels the stirring of selfishness within him must needs be tempted to prove the reality of his liberty, by doing what the law forbids, still, while recognizing this, and with a full historical knowledge, moreover, of all the ills with which the abuse of freedom has afflicted humanity, I say deliberately that if God offered me instinct with security, or freedom with danger, I would choose freedom.

But then, it may be urged, What have you to say about

the laws of heredity and solidarity? Had it not been better to dispense, at least, with these? I unhesitatingly answer, No. I am of the mind of that heathen forefather of mine, who, when told that baptism, while giving him heaven, would separate him from his dearest, deliberately refused it. And at the prompting of what motive? Of that which made St. Paul exclaim, "I could wish myself accursed from Christ for my brethren," of that which struck out from the travailing soul of Moses the glorious words, "Spare these," these foolish straying sheep "or blot me, I pray Thee, out of the book which Thou hast written." It is in sympathy with such words as these that we feel and know the law of solidarity to be the prime condition of human blessedness, because it is no other than the law of love.

And now let us not forget, as men are so apt to do, that this law operates in both directions, to facilitate the transmission of good as well as of evil influences. For solidarity means that humanity is a sensitive organism, the seat of a single life, feeling the impulse, responding to the influence, and thrilling to the pain or pleasure of each of its members. If, therefore, every evil influence can propagate itself throughout the whole ocean of human feeling, just as every vibration of the light-æther can to the utmost confines of that world-embracing medium, so also can every impulse for good. If the spring of love be in me, this law secures to it free course, and illimitable influence. Then I know that for every loving choice of mine, the whole world of humanity is waiting! What a dignifying, what an intensifying, what an enlarging, of my moral life is here! How it elevates the motive of every action; how it opens all the floodgates of that glorious enthusiasm of humanity, which every heroic soul has felt! How it justifies what some

have called the quixotic Christian impulse of fraternity! Let the worst come, I say, let the heavens fall, life is still worth living if it have such splendid issues as this! When a true thought, which is also a deep and great one, gets once breathed upon the air, this law secures to it an indestructible vitality; for there is something in the heart of man which rises up to greet it, to welcome it, and to rejoice in it; just as the plants do when they throw out their triumphant garlands of flowers to hail the coming of the vernal sun. Not only physiology, but much more comparative philology, and in these last days comparative religion also, have been combining to force this conception upon the understanding and heart of the world. We would not part with it if we could. We would not break ourselves off from the great life of our toiling and suffering kind, even if by so doing we could escape the thousand ills which a community of nature and interest brings along with it.

Yes, but I may be asked here, Could not a wise Omnipotence have given us this high prerogative of freedom, and this quick participation in the sensitive life of humanity, and yet have lightened for us the load of moral evil, or opened to us at least a brighter pathway to moral restoration? If the high gift of freedom must become the fatal spring of that torrent of evil which, like a dark river of death, has filled the whole course of man's history, might not the Divine love have erected somewhere a barrier against its destructiveness? It may, I answer, have been just and necessary for God to make man innocent, and to leave him to win perfection for himself through fall and struggle. When once, indeed, the will to live, as Schopenhauer calls it, had mastered the will to love, the only way of salvation was obviously the way of self-denial,

True as beautiful is the address of Goethe to the sinful soul—

> "Till this truth thou knowest,
> Die to live again;
> Stranger-like thou goest,
> In a world of pain."

And perhaps to the first transgressors there may have appeared as much hope as beauty in such words. Death unto a sin recently indulged may to them have seemed not wholly impossible. But how is it with us, who came into the world, as we too well know, with the yoke of evil passions bound on us by the law of heredity, with a will fatally weakened, and with selfish lusts raging for satisfaction with the accumulated force of ages of indulgence? What is liberty to us, in such circumstances, but liberty to do wrong? What is fraternity to us, but fraternity in a common impulse and sentiment of inordinate selfishness? Can it be just, then, for God, who made us what we are, and set us in the concourse of all these tyrannous impulses, to require us to master our inherited vices by the effort of an enfeebled will? Having given us a nature, weak at the first, and so plastic to evil impressions that these once made must needs pass into forces of habit, is it just in Him to require us to struggle up by our own strength alone, and with palsied hands to defeat His enemies and ours? How are those going to answer this question who deny the possibility of Divine revelation and the reality of Divine succour? No revelation is there, no inspiration, no inbreathing of a spiritual might which may potentialize our feebleness, nothing but what man can win for himself, in the nightmare of that dim futility to which heredity has reduced us? How can you wonder, then, that men like Mill, who believe this, cry out in shrieking exasperation against the injustice

of God? They dwell in the horror of a great darkness because with their own hands they have blotted out the sun of God's redeeming love from the heaven of their thoughts and hopes.

Oh, my brethren, groaning and struggling among the distracted confusions of our time, life is tolerable to me because I believe that, while God foresaw and permitted all which has happened, He at the same time determined, or ever the world was, to make man's sin the occasion of such a display of His love as should dazzle the eyes of the bright sons of the morning, and fill all heaven with praise. I am not afraid to say with Krause that God felt the pain of His poor children who had wilfully cast themselves into selfish misery; and that this sympathy with sinners only failed to produce unblessedness in the heart of our tender Father, because along with the pain, and stimulated by it, came the resolve, by an act of infinite and ineffable sacrifice, to rescue them from misery and restore them to life. Down all the long ages of the past this redeeming purpose was silently working towards its end; the Divine Word lighting with the beams of His truth, and sustaining by the force of His sympathy, the generations which only knew Him as an inward voice. And then, in the fulness of the times, when the world's teachers were able to receive the truth, and the world's multitudes had been taught the need for it, God sent forth His Only Begotten Son, clothed with visible flesh and speaking with man's voice, to take up for us the great battle against evil, and to bring it to a triumphant issue. Further, He did it in such a way as to glorify all the laws which He had established. His Son should come under the great law of solidarity. Man amongst men, He should feel the full force and horror of evil. No favour should be shown Him. Down into the depths where the

lowest lie should He come, down into the very focus of all evil forces, there to fight His awful battle, to be tempted, to be grieved, to be oppressed as never a Job or a Paul was, and to win to the shore of victory, if He won thither at all, against the full stress of all the stormy tides of evil. How He fought that battle; how He fainted in the stress and darkness of it; how, beaten to His knee by hosts of mighty foes, He yet struggled up again, and with the flaming sword of love smote unto death him that had the power of death; all this is written in the story of His life.

But what most it concerns us to notice is this, that whatever was done by Him, was done for mankind as a whole. Christ, we are told, was a new Adam, the Father of a new race, the Head and Source of a new Creation, which should derive from Him, in the second birth of faith, a Diviner nature, a pure opulent life potentialized by the spirit of His love. But just because this life is moral in its impulse and its nature, it cannot be taken physically like the life of the body, but must be received voluntarily in each case through the illimitable trust and self-surrender of faith. Nevertheless it is a life for all, seeing that self-surrender to Christ is possible for all. Not because a man is a Jew, or a prince, or a philosopher, but because he is a man, having the nature which Jesus assumed and enlarged and ennobled and bore triumphantly through death to the throne of the Eternal, we, the humble servants of the Lord, are bidden to offer to him a full and free redemption, on the sole condition that by trustful self-surrender he becomes one spirit with Christ. This law of solidarity within the Church seems never to have been absent from St. Paul's thought. He cannot too frequently repeat that all our highest blessings are gained and kept in Christ. "I live," he said of himself, "and yet not

I, but Christ liveth in me." And what was true of himself was no less true of his Colossian brethren. "Ye died," he cries, died to the old selfish evil, "and your life is hid with Christ in God." If it were the good pleasure of the Father "that in Christ should all the pleroma," all the fulness of the Divine perfections, dwell, it was not less true that "in Him ye are made full," full of the very life of God, of that grace which is "Christ in you, the hope of glory." Nor may we confine the operation of this law to the limits of the Church. It has an effect, both retrospective and universal. Christ is "the light which lighteth every man coming into the world." If there were any true religious thought, or any deep religious feeling, in the ages of preparation, to that Divine Word which spake as a still small voice in the heart's depths was it due. It was this Voice of God which spoke, in Creation and Providence, those words of wisdom and love in which men (had they but listened with attentive ear) might have caught the declaration "of His eternal power and Godhead." It was this Divine Word, anointed of God to be man's Redeemer, who as truly came near to the Gentile in signs of natural beauty and order, in testimonies of conscience, and mutual moral questionings, as to the Jew in types and shadows and prophetic pre-intimations.

Are we disposed perchance to murmur because it seems to us that the full declaration of God's redeeming will was too long delayed? How can we tell, I answer, what men were ready to receive? Might it not rather seem, from the after fortunes of the Gospel, as if Christ had anticipated "the fulness of the time"? What says the Apostle? "He came unto His own," to His own whom He had been specially training for ages, "and His own received Him not." His Gospel, as we know to our sorrow, has

been preached for more than eighteen centuries to an ungrateful world. And still, either through the coldness of the teachers or the perversity of the hearers, to the majority it is preached in vain.

Men will not understand that God cannot force truth and life on the unwilling without robbing them of their moral freedom; without depriving them of that very nature which He sent His Son to renew. Men must take the Gospel freely, or they cannot have its blessing. They must submit to Christ willingly, or they cannot enter into His spirit of absolute submission to the Father. It was "because of the hardness of the people's hearts" that Moses had to permit things which were less than absolutely good, and that our Lord had to tell His disciples what I fear He has still to tell us, "I have many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." When we think of the stubborn moral hindrances which the Gospel has to overcome, let us strive to be humble and patient. Is it not enough for us to know that in the purpose and counsel of the Omnipotent, redemption is to be absolutely universal in its scope? "God was in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself," yea, not this world only, but whatever other intelligent worlds are to be found within the bounds of His infinite sway. "It was the good pleasure of the Father, through Him, to reconcile all things unto Himself; through Him I say, whether things upon the earth, or things in the heavens." God created all things, "to the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in the heavenlies might be made known, through the Church, the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord." How vast is the scope, how illimitable the range, of this Christian solidarity, as it is set forth in these twin

Epistles to Ephesus and Colossæ! Do we owe those ancient heretics nothing then who, by their earnest speculations upon evil, struck out for us such glorious and far-reaching revelations as these? Was it not well for us, and for all generations of believers, that, by their stubborn battle for a clearer truth and a stronger light, they called out, it may be into more distinct perception, at any rate into larger and fuller expression, the great thought of St. Paul, that not only Jews and Gentiles, but absolutely all things in the heaven above and in the earth beneath should be "summed up in Christ"?

Grant me only this, and all is plain to me. What are sin and pain, yea, what are whole lives and generations full of sin and pain, if God Himself, coming forth from the calm of His unchanging bliss, take on Himself the whole burden of His creature's woe, break with His own arm the bonds of His creature's curse, and pass Himself into His creature's soul as its strength and life?

I know that we cannot escape the possibility that free creatures by their obstinate selfishness may conceivably defeat all the efforts of Omnipotent Love. We are not, indeed, driven to this conclusion by any words of Scripture, however some may have misunderstood those words, but rather by the nature of the case. Physical science with its laws of heredity and continuity, and much more mental science with its laws of association and of the persistence of habits, push us onward to the dread suggestion, that the will of man, opposing itself to a Divine goodness seen and hated, might harden itself into immovable moral obduracy. When I survey these possibilities as they stand out in the necessities of thought and the lurid light of abandoned lives, they shake my soul with a great terror, and may well make the impious tremble.

What is your hope then, I may be asked, in the face of this tremendous possibility? Must God surrender vast multitudes to the hopeless misery of eternal selfishness? Shall evil in their case triumph after all? I have no clear assurance, I acknowledge, on the answer to this terrible question; but I have at least a hope, deep based on Scripture, that the Love which is God will conquer some time, at long last, the evil which is selfishness. When straining my eyes, with eager, tremulous longing, to pierce the depths of that thunder-cloud which hangs threatening over the end of the impenitent, it is not the angry flash of wrath, it is the dawning light of love, which I see illuminating its darkness. I listen in the awful silence, and a voice seems to whisper, "Child, it is I. Behind the cloud which affrights thee there lurks neither a dark necessity nor any invincible element of resistance intractable to My will and purpose, Whatever is done, I am the Doer of it, and My heart is Love. Doubtest thou? Then look into the face of My Beloved, behold the manger-cradle and the uplifted cross. Can anything be too hard for the Almighty Love which shines from these? Can any mystery be too dark for this light to illumine? Can any task be too tremendous for this power to achieve? Looking at these, canst thou not trust Me in ways too devious for thy feet, too dark for thy vision, when 'clouds and darkness are the habitation of My throne'?" Yes, our Father, we can and we do trust Thee, not only in our own doubts and sins and misgivings, but also in the darkest bereavements which time can bring us. We trust Thee with our dear ones, who were evil, and who went to Thee with their evil unsubdued in their hearts. We mourned and wept over them, we pleaded vainly with them, while they were with us, and now, now when they are out of reach, we would fain stretch across to them hands

of help, would fain draw them penitent and purified to our bosom. So we feel to them. But Thy love is to ours as the ocean to the water-drop. It has a patience which we know not, a power which we know not, an infinity of means and resources, a depth and efficiency of tenderness, which neither eternity can exhaust nor resistance diminish. Thou canst not cease to love, for then Thou wouldst cease to be. Thou canst not cease to woo, to chastise and teach, for then Thou wouldst cease to love; and knowing this, we believe that, even in the case of the hardest and the worst, Thou wilt make good in Thine own time, and in ways past our finding out, that largest, grandest promise of Thy Word: "When all things shall have been subjected to Him, then shall the Son Himself be subjected to Him that did put all things under Him, that God may be all things in all creatures."

THE HEBREW APOSTASY.

I.

THE practice of sacrifice has occupied a central and decisive position in almost every known form of religion. Whatever else has varied this has always found a place, in all times and among all races, whether Aryan, Semitic, or Turanian. Under all diversities of form the fact is constant; and it becomes, therefore, a question of the first importance, What is the meaning of this fact? To what deep common need does it point? Of what universal belief is it the witness? As Christian men we naturally look to revelation for the final answer to that question.

Among Semitic peoples, and especially among that Semitic people which was the chosen organ of revelation, the keen sense of sin, and of the estrangement which it causes between man and God, has given to sacrifice special prominence and meaning. Above all, then, in the vast and complicated system of sacrifice (with its chosen ministers and its diversity of offerings and ceremonial), which forms, one may say, the heart of Jewish worship and belief, we naturally seek the clearest expression of true ideas upon this subject. At once, however, we are met by a great difficulty. The Jewish system is not one of final obligation and authority. It was not itself the substance, but only the shadow, of eternal truth. Its precepts were not for all time, but only for a period and economy which have already passed away. If, then, its sacrificial system is to be a trustworthy guide to us, in our inquiry, we must discover, if

possible, a Christian explanation of its main features and ordinances. Can we find such an explanation? If I answer that we can only discover it in a single book of the New Testament, I shall be thought, perhaps, to speak rashly. And yet I believe this to be the fact.

The question of the place and meaning of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament is never once directly considered by St. Paul. The difficulty which he had to encounter was of a larger kind. It was connected with the ordinance of circumcision, the initial rite of the Old Covenant; and it, therefore, shaped itself thus: Is the Law of Moses as a whole obligatory on the Christian? Can it deliver him from sin? Can it even help towards his deliverance? Is it, in such wise, a necessary element in God's eternal purpose of redemption that every believer in Christ must first become a son of the law before he can become a Christian? You know that the Apostle's answer to this question was a sweeping and uncompromising negative. The law could only make a demand for righteousness, but could in no wise enable anyone to answer that demand. A man could be justified before God, not by works of a law, but only by faith in Christ. The righteousness of the law could be fulfilled, not by knowledge of what the requirements of that righteousness were, but only by the power of the Holy Spirit. The law might, indeed, produce a conviction of sin, but it could neither give the sense of forgiveness, nor the power to become holy. The law, then, argued the Apostle, could be of no final nor perpetual validity. To the Christian especially the law was dead, and he to it; as much dead to it as a widow to the authority of a deceased husband. So, then, he concludes, "We are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held, that we should serve in newness of spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

If we were to accept this conclusion, without condition or explanation, it would seem to reduce our question about the Jewish law of sacrifice to insignificance. What have we to do with Jewish sacrifices, it might be urged, when the whole law, of which they were part, is dead and gone? What remains but that we bury it, as quickly as possible, in oblivion?

But that St. Paul never meant us to do any such thing is manifest, as from other parts of his writings, so especially from his well-known statement to the Romans, that "the things which were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." "The law was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ," and the office of the schoolmaster is by no means ended. He may not, indeed, have either authority to command or power to deliver, but he certainly still has a commission to teach, to exhort, and to comfort. It remains true, however, that in no part of his writings has the Apostle Paul formally drawn out for us the lessons contained in the Jewish system of sacrifice. For though at times he uses sacrificial metaphors and references, he was not required by the needs of those whom he addressed to draw out explicitly the precise meaning of such metaphors and references.

Nor again can we find any formal exposition of the great lessons of the Jewish sacrificial system in what is reported to us by the Evangelists of the teaching of our Lord. Implicitly, it is true, He is more than once brought into comparison with the sacrificial victims. He is called by John the Baptist, as by the author of the Apocalypse, "The Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world," and more than once, as in chap. xxii. of St. Luke's Gospel, our Lord identifies Himself with the suffering servant of the

prophet Isaiah. But these are all perfectly general expressions, and contain nothing explicit on the precise connection between the Jewish sacrifices and their Eternal Ideal. Our Lord's general attitude, indeed, towards the sacrificial worship of the Mosaic law is very much that of the Hebrew prophets. He generally ignores it, to fix attention upon that ethical reality of self-sacrifice to which it points. In one passage, however, He does seem to indicate, not obscurely, its true connection with the kingdom of God. He says of the law in general, and therefore of course of this part of it, that not one jot or tittle shall pass away till all be fulfilled. It follows, then, that if the sacrificial worship of the law have indeed passed away, this can only be because of its fulfilment.

But if so, then the question becomes even more urgent, how has it been fulfilled? And to that question a clear and precise answer is given in the Epistle to the Hebrews alone. There, then, I propose to seek it, that upon the great subject of the Christian sacrifice, the discussion of which has so powerfully agitated, and is still agitating, the Church, we may obtain the guidance and direction of the Word of God.

But here again we are met by a formidable difficulty. Are we sure, it is asked, that the Epistle to the Hebrews has a legitimate claim to be called the Word of God? Do we know who wrote it? and if so, can we say that its author was an inspired man? I am afraid that around this question there still hangs some of the doubt expressed by the great Origen when he said that, in spite of the uncertain echoes of the tradition of the end of the second century, "God only knew who was the author."

It seems to me absolutely certain that St. Paul was not its author. The most reliable tradition leads us to this conclusion. The Epistle to the Hebrews is employed so

largely by no primitive author as by Clement of Rome. And it is precisely at Rome, in Italy, and in the Western Church, that the Pauline authorship is denied. No such result would seem to be possible, if Clement, Bishop of Rome in the first century, had known St. Paul to be the author of our Epistle. The style of the Epistle, again, even more than the tradition of the Western Church, excludes the possibility that St. Paul was its author. From the days of Origen to the very last year, in which Bishop Westcott published his Commentary, the greatest scholars have held this evidence to be decisive. Its general tenour has been well and briefly stated by Archdeacon Farrar, as follows: "The writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews cites differently from St. Paul, he writes differently, he argues differently, he quotes from a different edition of the Pentateuch, he constructs and connects his sentences differently, he builds up his paragraphs on a wholly different model. His Greek is different, his style different, many of his phrases different, his line of reasoning wholly different. . . . St. Paul is rugged and impetuous, while this writer is elaborately and faultlessly rhetorical. He never abandons his calm and sonorous euphony, and he delights in amplitude and rotundity of expression."

But if in deference to such considerations we surrender the Pauline authorship, to whom shall we attribute its composition? Its probable date, before the destruction of Jerusalem, and an expression in the letter itself, narrow considerably the area of our inquiry. In the third verse of the second chapter we read of the great salvation as follows: "Which having been spoken at the first, through the Lord, was confirmed unto us by them that heard it." The author then, though not an Apostle, was a hearer and contemporary of the Apostles. Again, there can be no

doubt that he was of the school of St. Paul. "The thoughts of the Epistle," as Origen said, "are St. Paul's." If St. Paul had been obliged to deal with the subject of this Epistle, we can be sure that he would have said upon it substantially what our author says.

Again, it is absolutely certain that the writer of this Epistle was well acquainted with many of the works of Philo of Alexandria. His method is that of Philo. "The book is based," as Reuss remarks, "on the allegorico-typical interpretation of the Old Testament." All the sacrificial figures and ordinances of the Levitical ritual are treated as temporal expressions of an Eternal Ideal. The tabernacle is made after a typical pattern shown to Moses on the Mount. The priests and sacrifices are but typical shadows of a spiritual Archetype. In the very facts of the Old Testament history, and not in its facts alone, but also in its reticences, as in the case of Melchizedek, the author sees suggestions of realities in the super-sensual world. His language again betrays an acquaintance, even a familiarity, with the characteristic phrases of Philo and his school. In many passages of the Epistle where Greek words occur, which are used nowhere else in the New Testament, they are found to be words which are used by Philo.

Once more, the Epistle was written to some particular Church, with the special circumstances and individuals of which the author is well acquainted, to whom he can speak with authority, from whom he has been separated for a season, and for whose prayers he asks "that he may be restored to them the sooner." He is, further, a Hellenistic Jew, and a friend of Timothy, with whom he hopes shortly to visit the Church which he addresses. With all these facts before us, it ought not to be impossible to suggest at least, if not to specify, the probable author.

Since he was a companion of St. Paul, of well-known name and recognised authority, he must be included in the following list: Barnabas, Luke, Clement, Mark, Titus, Silvanus, Aquila, and Apollos. Of these Titus was not a Jew by birth, Mark was not a Hellenistic Jew, and of Silas, beyond the fact that he was St. Paul's companion, we know absolutely nothing. Clement, by his large quotation of the Epistle, proclaims that some other was the author. A man does not usually quote himself; and besides, his whole style and mode of thought, as we know them from his extant Epistle, are rather practical than speculative. If, again, he had been the author, the Church of Rome must have known and proclaimed the fact. The character of Barnabas is little suited to the style and contents of our Epistle. He was more an actor than an orator, more a saint than a philosopher; and, as a Levite, he would not have been likely to refer, as does the author of our Epistle, to the ritual of the Book of Exodus where it differs from that of the Temple at Jerusalem, with which Barnabas was necessarily familiar. Aquila, again, though a good man, was so little original and independent that even in the ministry of teaching he is only named along with his wife Priscilla. There remain, then, of our list only St. Luke and Apollos, and to one of these, as it seems to me, the authorship of our Epistle may, with a very high degree of probability, be assigned.

There are many coincidences of language and idiom between our Epistle and the known writings of St. Luke; and it was the tradition at Alexandria that he had translated the Epistle into Greek. A careful comparison, however, speedily breaks down this appearance of agreement. St. Luke's Greek style is correct, and occasionally elegant, but it wholly lacks the fervour and rhetorical power of our

Epistle. The contrast between the two is that between the style of Lord Selborne and that of the late lamented Canon Liddon, and certainly any one well acquainted with the writings of these two authors would not be likely to attribute the works of either to the pen of the other. Again, it would appear from the fourteenth verse of the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, taken with the context, that St. Luke was by birth a Gentile, while it is almost certain that the author of the Epistle was a Jew.

There remains, then, of all our list of possible authors only Apollos. Luther first suggested his name, and this suggestion has received the powerful support in modern times of Bleek, Tholuck, Reuss, Alford, and Farrar. To me, I confess, it seems wonderful that this supposition has not received more general acceptance. Bear in mind the several conditions of authorship which I have already enumerated, and then call to remembrance what we know of Apollos from the New Testament. He was "a Jew, an Alexandrian by race, a learned or eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures." And when he had been perfectly instructed in the way of God, we are told that "he powerfully confuted the Jews (at Ephesus), and that publicly, showing by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ." Again, with respect to his position and influence in the Church, we have the references in the First Epistle to the Corinthians. So great was his reputation at Corinth, that a party was formed in his name, which held its place beside those who had chosen as their leaders St. Paul and St. Peter, the very first of the Apostles. So great, again, was the confidence which St. Paul reposed in him, and so entire the harmony between these two in teaching, that the Apostle can say that "he had planted, and Apollos had watered," and that

both were "God's fellow-workers" in the husbandry of grace. Every one of the necessary conditions of authorship seems to me to be satisfied in these Scriptural notices of Apollos; and thus I feel disposed to say, not only, with Archdeacon Farrar, "The Epistle was either written by Apollos, or else the name of the author is unknown to us;" but also, with Dr. Kendrick, in Lange's Commentary, "The only name on which we can, as it seems to me, fasten, and make a vigorous and solid argument, is that of Apollos."

But if Apollos be the author of this Epistle, then I conceive that all difficulty in receiving it as the Word of God is at an end. He who was the trusted companion and co-worker of St. Paul, the leader who stands in the Corinthian Church beside the very chiefest Apostles, the powerful orator and mighty Scriptural scholar, who, at Ephesus, was the great champion of the truth against Jewish gainsayers, is a teacher manifestly chosen and sent by the Spirit of God, and one who can speak in the name of Christ with power and authority. If even the Church of Christ throughout the world had not received this Epistle as God's Word, the acknowledgment of the authorship of Apollos would alone have been sufficient to secure for it the weight of an inspired authority.

But now, in the next place, it will greatly help us to understand the scope and intent of this inspired argument, if we can determine approximately what needs it was intended to meet, and to what persons it was originally addressed. If the conclusion to which I have come as to the authorship of the Epistle be received as one of high probability, this will greatly help us in our present inquiry.

It is admitted, with an all but universal consent, that our Epistle was addressed to a Church consisting wholly or chiefly of Christians of Hebrew birth. The Epistle is in

the main a Christian interpretation of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. It assumes throughout, as Hebrew Christians would assume, that the ancient ordinance of sacrifice could still render a didactic service to the Christian Church. Sacrifices are never spoken of, with Pauline harshness, as "weak and beggarly elements," but, with all tenderness to inevitable Jewish prejudices, as the appointed figures and shadows of the true. They may no longer perhaps be of practical obligation, but at least they retain a high value as signs and explications of the things which they represent.

At the same time it is taught very firmly that they form no longer any necessary part of Christian worship. No man will be the worse for being without them. Any man who shall abandon Christ in order to retain them will be nothing less than an apostate. The strain alike of teaching and warning in this Epistle proves thus conclusively that it was written to a Church consisting wholly, or nearly so, of Christians who were Hebrew by birth.

But where could such a Church be found in the Apostolic age? Nowhere, I believe, but in Jerusalem or Alexandria; not certainly in such Gentile cities as Corinth or Rome.

Can the Epistle, then, have been addressed to the Christians of Jerusalem? There are many reasons for withholding assent to such a suggestion. The quotations from the Septuagint prove that the Epistle was written in Greek, which could hardly have been possible had it been intended for Jerusalem. Again, the persons to whom it was addressed are praised for their assiduity "in ministering to the saints," and it is well known that in the Apostolic age this meant "ministering to the poor saints in Jerusalem." Jerusalem received alms, it did not give them. Once more, it is apparent, from the third verse of the second chapter, that the Church to which the Epistle was addressed included

none who had been direct disciples of the Lord Jesus, a state of things almost impossible at Jerusalem in the period before its destruction, while Timothy was yet living.

But if we exclude Jerusalem, then the only place left where we might look for a purely Hebrew Christian Church is Alexandria. Now Alexandria, with its magnificent library and museum, with its noble Exchange, its extensive quays, its vast commerce inherited from Tyre and Carthage, and its motley concourse of all the races of the world, was acknowledged by the Romans to be the second city in the empire. It had at least six hundred thousand inhabitants, of whom a large proportion were Jews, forming one of the three original constituents of the population. Nor were these mingled promiscuously with the Greek and Egyptian elements. On the contrary, they inhabited a separate quarter known as the Regio Judæorum, and shut off, by walls and gates of its own, from the rest of the city. Jewish Alexandria was, in fact, a kind of second Jerusalem, whose people were governed by their own Ethnarch and their own national laws, and who frequently entered into fierce conflicts with their Greek neighbours. Here, then, was an exclusive Jewish community, in the midst of which an exclusively Hebrew Christian Church might easily have been founded.

Once again, as I have already intimated, if Apollos wrote our Epistle it is highly probable that he would stand to such a community in the very relations implied therein. He was himself an Alexandrian of great eloquence and popularity, and of that power and authority in the Primitive Church which would enable him to assume unchallenged, as he does in this Epistle, the position and tone of an authoritative teacher. Again the author, as we have seen, writes to those with whom he is at home, in whose history

and trials he has previously mingled, whom he has left fo a season, and to whom, in company with Timothy, he hopes soon to return. If, then, we assume, as is but natural, that, after assisting St. Paul in Asia Minor and Greece, Apollos returned to a somewhat settled ministry among his own people, these local references are just such as we should expect to find. I conclude, therefore, that it is highly probable that Apollos wrote this Epistle to the Hebrew Christians of Alexandria, during a temporary absence, possibly on a missionary journey, in Italy.*

If these conclusions appear probable, then it will not be impossible to determine from the Epistle itself what were the needs and dangers which it was written to meet and to supply. In its early days we are told that the Hebrew Church of Alexandria had been conspicuous for good works. It had endured a great fight of afflictions, though not yet called upon to resist unto blood. Nor was its love in those gracious times less than its fortitude. For, looking to the better inheritance, its members not only took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, but also had compassion on them that were in bonds. As time went on, however, and their eager hopes of Messiah's speedy return were disappointed,

* The only possible objection to this conclusion arises out of the fact that, at the end of the first century, this Epistle was known at Rome and largely quoted by Clement, while the first references to it in Alexandria are much later, and in a tone of great uncertainty. Is it not probable, then, it has been asked, that an Epistle so early and familiarly known at Rome was first addressed to Rome? I think that the facts point in an utterly opposite direction. For if the Epistle had been addressed to Rome the Roman Church would certainly have known its author, and would not have had time to forget his name before the close of the first century; while, on the other hand, if it were first addressed to Alexandria, it is easy to understand how the author's name might have been forgotten before the birth of the Christian literature of Alexandria, at the close of the second century

they lost the fervour of their first love. The public assemblies of the Church were deserted. Many sank into a state of mental and spiritual torpor, becoming dull of hearing, losing not only interest in what they had once prized, but also capacity to grasp and understand the more advanced teaching which the times required. Further, as might have been expected, this dulness of feeling and understanding was accompanied by grave signs of moral declension. Their early boldness, enthusiasm, and patient endurance had given place to a weary sluggishness and hopelessness; so that they needed to be bidden to "lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees." Like the Church of Laodicæa, they had sunk into a miserable lukewarmness of feeling and childishness of intellect, and were dragging on a feeble existence, without either profit or happiness.

And while they stood in this terribly perilous spiritual condition they were about to be smitten by the thunderstroke of a great trial and temptation. Already, as Apollos tells them, "they saw the day drawing nigh." The trumpet of fanatical patriotism had already sounded its fateful summons from the height of Mount Sion. It had been answered by the eager swordsmen of Galilee, and had already shaken the hearts of the turbulent crowds of Alexandria. Judea was preparing for a death-struggle with Rome, and every Jew, of whatever sect or faith, was being summoned to take his side. In the dark narrow lanes of the Regio Judæorum it was as though men heard again the dread cry of Carmel, "If the Lord be God, follow Him: but if Baal, then follow him." In the year 66 A.D. this challenge must have come to every Christian Jew as a personal summons. Was he to suffer the Roman to trample on the holy city because he was a Christian? Was he to turn a deaf ear to the death-cry of his nation, struggling in the

desperate grasp of the heathen oppressor, because he believed that a Jew was his Lord and his God? Nay, should he not rather throw himself unreservedly into the ranks of the sacred people, should he not sink in this dark crisis of their fate all which separated him from the children of Abraham? Was not blood more than opinion? Were not two thousand years of a glorious history more than the loose spiritual ties of yesterday—ties of opinion, preference, and belief, which had already been slackened by the wear and tear of ordinary life? Such feelings shook and swayed the Jewish Christian at the very centre of his deepest affections, and would have been of almost irresistible strength if even his Christian faith had kept its first freshness. But what was likely to be their effect in his present circumstances, when already his love was chilled, his hopes were dimmed, and the practical paralysis of fear and doubt had led him to abandon Christian worship, and to look upon the dim figure of the Christ as a fading and vanishing dream? Here were present all the predisposing causes of estrangement and apostasy, and unless something were done, and that speedily, to revive the energy of a drooping faith, it was all too likely that the light of the Alexandrian Church might be quenched, and its candlestick removed from its place.

It was at this critical moment, when everything betokened defeat and disaster, that the little company of Alexandrian Christians were summoned to their obscure meeting-place to hear a letter which had been sent to them by their famous leader and teacher. Many came, I doubt not, slackly and reluctantly. But if their faith in Jesus Christ had not utterly ebbed away, they must have listened, one thinks, in the hush of the upper chamber, with startled interest and kindling hearts to this noble apology for their

faith. Solemnly it warned them of their deadly danger, that they stood on the very brink of a hopeless apostasy, of an abandonment of the only hope of salvation, which in the case of such as they must needs be final and irremediable. For how could it be possible to renew again to repentance those who, "having tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and having tasted the good Word of God and the powers of the world to come," had "trodden underfoot the Son of God, and had counted the blood of the covenant wherewith they were sanctified an unholy thing, and had done despite to the Spirit of grace"? For them to fall back into Judaism, to abandon the substance for the shadow, the spirit for the flesh, redeeming grace for empty rites which, having been fulfilled and superseded, had lost all their efficacy; was to fall back into a formalism which they had found to be useless, and in which, therefore, it was impossible for them to believe. They could not even be good Jews. For them the alternative was Christianity or unbelief—either Christ, the one heavenly High Priest, and only sufficient sacrifice, or a world without God, and a life without heavenly communion.

Such was the appeal of this Epistle to those whom it originally addressed. And to us, too, standing as we do at a like point of decision, driven, whether we will or not, to make the like final choice between faith in Christ and a blank disbelief in everything Eternal and Divine, it has a word of warning not less solemn, a word of instruction not less momentous and significant. To us the question is addressed, not less urgently than it was to them: Is there any true sacrifice for sin? Has God provided any way of approach to His spotless holiness which may be traversed by those who are held back by the sense of their own unworthiness, and who are too often tempted to cry like

St. Peter in the unveiled brightness of the Divine power and purity, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." If there be such a sacrifice, in what does it consist? If there be such a way of reconciliation, how can it be traversed? Such were the questions which perplexed the little company of tempted people who first listened to this letter in the Alexandrian Jewry. Such are the questions which press imperiously for consideration to-day, when at the intenser moments of life the souls of men are startled into the condemnation of self-knowledge; and such are the questions to which I propose to seek an answer in my two remaining lectures.

II.

St. Paul, in his great controversy with those Jewish Christians who strove to make the ordinances of the Jewish Church a condition of Christian discipleship, endeavoured to show, not only that the covenant of grace had superseded the law, but also that it had preceded it. Considered historically, grace overlapped law, faith overlapped works, at both ends of the historical scale. And this was a plain proof to the Apostle, that not the method of law and obedience, but that of grace and trust, was in accordance with the eternal purpose of God. The law was a concession to human imperfection. It was a stepping down from the high pathway of grace to the low platform of dwarfed human capacity, in order that in due time men might be raised again, through the discipline of obedience, to the height from which they had fallen. The figure in Nature of this historical process is that of a road traversing a high mountain plateau, which has to descend into a valley in order to regain its original level on the opposite mountain range. The Apostle finds the proof of this position in the records of God's dealings with Abraham. Abraham was justified before God, not by obedience to a multitude of ceremonial precepts, but by faith in the presence and power of Him that called him. And thus the historical origin of the Gospel, and its true level and direction, are not to be sought in the valley-path of the law, true historical continuation as this might be of the

earlier road; but rather on the free and breezy heights of patriarchal life.

And as St. Paul goes back to Abraham in order to vindicate the larger scope and greater freedom of the Gospel, so in dealing with the institution of sacrifice, and with a like purpose, the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews goes back to the ethnic period before Abraham. He finds it asserted of Messiah in Psalm cx., that "he is a Priest for ever after the manner or order of Melchizedek." It was no doubt the intention of the author of that psalm to claim for Messiah the double office of Priest and King; and in order to find a true historical type of such a union, he has to go back to that primitive age in which the office of the Priesthood was not yet restricted by tribal or family distinctions, when still the royal head of the state might represent it before God, in religious service.

Now it is very important that we should not misunderstand the manner in which this historical and prophetic material is treated by our author. He conceives himself justified in instituting a comparison between Jesus and Melchizedek, because already such a comparison had been suggested by the spirit of prophecy. And so far, I imagine, he does no more than a sober modern expositor might have done. Messiah was to combine in His own Person the offices of King and Priest, just as they had been combined in the person of Melchizedek. But now, having got this firm foothold in history and prophecy, he proceeds, in the well-known Philonic and Alexandrian method, to draw out this comparison into the minutest details. The works of Philo enable us thoroughly to understand this. Philo held firmly the abstract theories of the Platonic philosophy. To him these theories represented absolute truth. But if the Platonic theories were true, they must, he thought,

be either stated or symbolically represented in that Word of God which was also absolutely true. He had not learnt, as we have, that the Holy Scriptures which reveal to us the nature of God and His relation to men might possibly neglect altogether, as outside the scope of its teaching, philosophical and scientific speculations. Philo believed that it must contain all truth, and therefore it was for him to read into revelation all the speculative truths of the Platonic philosophy. His method was misleading, and therefore we need not wonder that the results of its application are unsatisfactory.

Now, to a certain extent, the author of our Epistle adopts the method of Philo. Of two things he is assured: firstly, of the true nature and work of Jesus Christ; and, secondly, of the real correspondence between Christ and Melchizedek. What remains, then (and in this inference we detect the influence of Philo), but to seek in the short historical account of Melchizedek as many points of resemblance as possible to the nature and work of Christ? This comparison is very valuable to us, because it shows us what the author believed about Jesus Christ. It is valuable to us, even when we most dissent from some of its results considered as valid historical correspondences. Take one point by way of illustration. Nothing is said in the Old Testament of the natural descent of Melchizedek. This circumstance may mean nothing more to us than that in so brief a record it was not necessary to the writer's purpose to notice such a matter. To our author, however, it furnishes the occasion for a remarkable comparison. Melchizedek in the sacred record is "without father, mother, or genealogy," and this suggests to him that not merely in the Word of God, but also in fact, the Priesthood of the Lord Jesus was not dependent on descent, or limited by conditions of time.

The comparison is only glanced at as contributing an element to the great conclusion that He who is after the order of Melchizedek "abideth a priest continually;" still it is eminently Philonic. In the same manner Philo finds in the fact that the sacred record does not mention Sarah's mother, an indication of the truth that the mind which loves wisdom is not born "of the material perceptible to the senses," which may be regarded as the maternal origin of knowledge. To us such correspondences are only valuable as showing what the inspired author believed about Jesus Christ; but to his contemporaries at Alexandria they were weighty and significant. We may regard them, therefore, as means of establishing conclusions, certain in themselves, by considerations which would have weight among those to whom they were addressed.

If, however, some of the minor details of this comparison have only an indirect value for us, the fact that it was made, that the one author of the New Testament who treats specifically upon the sacrificial system of the Jews compares it in some points, to its disadvantage, with the universal system of ethnic sacrifice which preceded it, is of the very gravest meaning and importance. It reminds us that the practice of sacrifice did not originate in any recorded Divine command; that, existing before the establishment of the Mosaic law, it was taken on and adopted, as to its outward framework and main significance; and that, therefore, it will greatly help us to discover the central thought which it was intended to express, if we can learn something about those ethnic sacrifices, especially of the Semitic races, which were taken up into the worship of the covenant people, to be used, improved, and spiritualized.

The chosen people were an offshoot of the Semitic race. Since, therefore, any religious customs and traditions which

they may have inherited from the past would certainly be Semitic, it becomes of great importance in any inquiry about the meaning of the Biblical sacrifices, to ascertain, if we can, what was the ruling idea of their sacrificial institutions, among the Semitic tribes, before they passed them on into the covenant family. This inquiry has the more importance because the sacrificial worship of the Hebrews, as it is described to us in the Pentateuch, includes within it many elements which were added at a comparatively late period. A people's worship follows, though it may be slowly, its social and religious development. When a nation passes out of the pastoral into the agricultural state of life, its offerings increase in number and diversity; when the acquisition of private property becomes general, sacrifices have a tendency to assume the character of a tribute, paid by the tribe to its Divine over-Lord. And, again, when the conception of God's nature and character is refined, enlarged, and spiritualized, on the one side the sense of sin is deepened, and on the other that feeling is expressed by a corresponding development and moralizing of sacrificia. offerings. In a system of sacrifice which has thus embodied a great diversity of social and religious changes, it is extremely difficult to detect the master-thought of the whole institution, and it will help us greatly to do this if we can study it at an early stage of its development, when it has a comparatively simple form.

Can we do this, it may be asked, in the case of the Hebrew sacrifices? Before last year, in the course of which Professor Robertson Smith published his "Religion of the Semites," I should have hesitated to make the attempt. For although we possessed a great mass of miscellaneous information upon the subject of ethnic sacrifice, it had not been carefully sifted, so as to separate the Semitic traditions

from the rest, and to resolve these latter into their constituent elements. Now, however, it is not impossible, I believe, to give an approximately definite answer to the important question which I have started.

The trustworthiness of the answer depends, not so much on the antiquity of the records to be examined, as on the geographical relations of the Semitic peoples. Their most ancient records are to be found amongst the cuneiform inscriptions of Chaldæa. But then the most ancient civilization of that interesting country was not of Semitic origin. It was due to the genius of a probably Cushite people. The Semites came into the land as conquerors, and just as in the case of the Roman conquerors of Greece, and of the barbarian conquerors of Rome, they adopted the civilization and institutions of the vanquished people. How much, then, is Cushite and how much Semitic in the earliest accounts of Semitic life in Mesopotamia it would be difficult to determine. We must look for reliable information from some other quarter. In seeking it, we are greatly helped by the geographical relations of the Semitic races, and by the unchangeableness of the nomad life of Arabia.

Arabia has been in all ages the home and central fortress of the Semites. From it, as from a centre, they spread out as conquerors, during the ages before Christ, into a limited and well-defined region of the world. If we neglect some possible early incursions into Ethiopia, it may be said that the wave of their conquests broke against the barriers of the mountains of Elam on the east and of those of the Taurus on the north; and never passed far beyond those barriers. This fact gives to Arabia its special character as the native hearth and home of Semitic life. If then we can ascertain what was the ruling idea of Semitic sacrifice,

as represented to us in the unchanging pastoral life of Arabia, we shall be able to approach the study of the complicated system of Hebrew sacrifice with great advantage. We shall possess a valuable key to the meaning of that sacrificial system which the ancestors of the Beni-Israel took with them from their motherland, and which furnished a formal framework to that Hebrew system which was developed out of it, under the guidance of the Spirit of God.

I can do no more of course at present than give you the merest outline of the results of the wide and very careful study of the subject which has been made by Professor Robertson Smith.

First, then, there is clear evidence that there was a time very long ago, when men believed that they shared a common life with their god and their domestic animals. The bond of that life, as conceived by them, was a purely physical bond. So long as that bond remained unbroken, their tribal god was bound to help and defend them; to help them by the gift of those simple physical necessaries which belonged to their pastoral existence, and to defend them from those enemies, human and ghostly, with whom their tribal quarrels brought them into conflict. In prosperous times, when food was plentiful and there was peace in his borders, the ancient Semite concluded that the tribe and its god were in harmony. He was thus religious, in the sense that he had full trust and confidence in his God; but as the tie which bound them was rather physical than moral, his religion had probably but little effect on his conduct to his neighbour. When, however, the peaceful and happy routine of his life was broken by calamity, when the threatening clouds of drought, famine, or war began to gather in the bright sky of his careless life, then he

concluded that the god of his tribe was displeased, and was punishing him and his neighbours for some witting or unwitting offence. The strong bond of the common life, which secured the help and protection of the god, was broken or loosened, and must be renewed and re-tied. But how could this be done? Only, as it seemed to him, in one way. The god and his people must partake anew of the sacred life which bound them together, by means of a public religious ceremony. But where were they to obtain the materials for such a solemn participation? How could they lay their hands on that sacred life which they possessed in common with their god? Their firm belief that this life was shared by their domestic animals, or by animals in their very nature of divine kinship, indicated a way to their end. The life of the tribe they believed to be carried in its blood, and since certain animals were of kin to them and their god, if they could only share with their god the blood of such animals they believed that the broken communion would be restored. To obtain the blood they slew the animal. Then they gave to the god his share of the blood, by pouring it upon his pillar or rough altar; while in the earliest and rudest ages the tribe drank the remainder. With the advance of civilization, this blood-draught became more and more repugnant to them, and then for drinking they substituted the sprinkling of the worshippers, or a feast upon the flesh of the victim.

Once again, as time went on, and ideas grew more refined, it became difficult to believe that animals really shared the life which was common to the god and his worshippers. As men consciously rose in the scale of moral and intellectual life their conception of the nature of God became spiritualized, and the gulf between such a God and the beasts of the stall widened until it became un-

bridgable. Grave doubts must then have arisen whether the sacred life were in truth carried by the blood of an animal, and whether, therefore, the customary sacrifices had power to re-tie that vital bond which transgression of some kind had broken. What in this terrible perplexity were they to do? Re-establish the broken link in some way they must; and how could that be possible, they reasoned, except by a common Divine and human participation in the sacred life? From the obvious answer to this question they must have shrunk at first in horror and dismay. If they killed a man they would certainly get possession of the sacred blood, and so might as certainly restore the lost peace and prosperity. But might they, could they, do this awful thing? Was not the shrinking of feeling which they experienced when they thought of it the very voice of God within, and could they disobey God in order to please God? So, perhaps, at first they thought. But in some terrible time, when wives and children were perishing in the drought or pestilence, or when tribesmen were being slain by hundreds in some disastrous war, the horror of the present suffering overbore the horror of natural repugnance, and they offered a human sacrifice. Only, it would seem, in great straits, or for great purposes, were these sacrifices yielded throughout the greater part of the heathen world; but when we see how the habit of doing the direst deeds (as of burning religious enemies) can rob such deeds of their horror, we shall be prepared to expect, as we find, that among some especially superstitious nations, human sacrifices became terribly common.

Again, the advance of larger views and milder manners made human sacrifices appear intolerably barbarous, and inspired the doubt whether God could be really pleased with them. And then came the humanizing thought,

revealed by God to Abraham, that the ram caught in the thicket by his horns might be offered instead of the son.

Professor Robertson Smith has shown that this was the real succession of events, and that the common idea that human sacrifice was the most ancient is not borne out by facts.

And now let us ask, What is the central ruling idea of ancient Semitic sacrifice, as revealed by this careful examination? Plainly it is this: that communion between a god and his worshippers can only be kept up, or renewed when broken, by the solemn participation of God and man in a common sacred life. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of this discovery as a directive fact in the study of the sacred Scriptures, whether they refer to the ethnic or the covenant state of life. If the ancestors of Israel thought thus of sacrifice, it is certain that the conception would never be wholly lost while sacrifice continued to be offered: and thus the inquiry becomes not less interesting than important, can we detect the influence of this ruling idea in the sacrificial system of the chosen people?

The ethnic practice which we have reviewed belongs to a period in Semitic history long anterior to the days of Abraham. We might, therefore, naturally expect that some of its main features would appear in the earliest account of patriarchal sacrifices. In this expectation, however, we are disappointed. At the same time, it is to be remarked that this disappointment arises, not from the actual presence of alien or strange elements, but from the extreme brevity of the account. For the most part nothing is recorded of the patriarchal practice but the erection of an altar or pillar of sacrifice. The three exceptions are, the sacrifice of Noah, the offering of Isaac, and the erection by Jacob of a pillar at Bethel; and nothing is said in the account of any of

these offerings of the blood of the victims or of its application. The offering of Noah is said to have been a burnt-offering, a form of sacrifice of comparatively late introduction. The archaic form of expression shows, however, that the record of this offering belongs to an early period of the epoch of burnt sacrifices. "He offered burnt-offerings," it is said, "and the Lord smelled the sweet savour." This shows us that men had then so far spiritualized their idea of God that they thought it fitter to send up to Him their sacrifice in the etherealized form of altar-smoke than in the grosser form of blood. In the offering of Isaac, nothing is said about the application of the blood, because in this case the blood of the human victim was not shed; and of the manner in which Abraham dealt with the blood of the ram we have no description. Jacob is said to have poured oil on the pillar at Bethel. But obviously a homeless fugitive would have no animal to offer, and the oil which he used is the later representative of the fat of a victim, in which, as in the blood, the life was supposed to have its seat.

Baffled in this direction, we naturally turn next to that primary covenant sacrifice which was offered during the period which intervened between the patriarchal age and the formal publication of the Levitical law of sacrifice. Of this we have fortunately a pretty full account, and we detect in it at once a remarkable survival of primitive practice. The sacrifice is offered, not by Aaron, or by priests of the tribe of Levi, but by "twelve young men of the children of Israel," manifestly selected to represent the twelve tribes in the vigour and freshness of their life. We have before us here the record of the most ancient covenant sacrifice of which Holy Scripture gives us any detailed description. And now, what does it tell us of

the manner in which Moses dealt with the blood of the burnt- and peace-offerings? With half of it, we are told, he sprinkled the altar, assigning it thus to God, as His share of the common sacred life; taking afterwards the other half, which he had put into basons, and sprinkling it on the people, as a sign that they partook with God in the virtue of the sacrifice. The spiritual effect of this ceremony can hardly be better stated than in the following words of Bishop Westcott: "So the human desire was fulfilled and justified. The blood of the covenant, the power of a new life, made available for the people of God, enabled them to hold communion with Him." It is a refined form of the ancient belief that God and man were brought into amicable and grace-bringing communion, by sharing anew and together the life which was common to both.

"The teaching thus broadly given in the consecration of the people to God, found a more detailed exposition in the consecration of the priests, the representatives of the people in the Divine service." The very appointment of the priests to come between man and God indicated a deepening sense of sin, and of its power to separate man from God, and to make him unfit for Divine service. We are not surprised, then, to find that in the consecration of the priests this new consciousness receives clear and emphatic expression. First, the altar at which the priests officiated is felt to have been defiled by the touch of sinful ministers. It, therefore, is first purified by having the blood of the sacrifice applied to it, and poured out at its base; and by having the other special seats of life, the fat of the inwards, the caul of the liver, and the kidneys with their fat, burnt upon it. The sacred life touches it, and it is clean. Then a ram is slain as a burnt-offering, for a sweet savour. After-

wards a second ram is slain, called expressly "the ram of consecration," to purify the ministers, as well as the place of their service. And now, again, we find a repetition of the most ancient Semitic custom. Part of the blood of this victim is sprinkled on the altar, and thus given to God; while part of it is put upon the ear, thumb, and foot of the priests, that, in the virtue of the life which it represents, and which is thus applied to them, they may hear, and work, and walk as God would have them to do.

The deep sense of sin which is here expressed had manifestly arisen from Israel's peculiar view of the character of God. He was no longer for them mainly the God of the tribe, sharing their life, and bound to help and defend them so long as they offered to Him the customary gifts and services. He was, above all, the God of righteousness; so righteous in His very essence that He could not bless the wicked, even among those who worshipped Him. The lofty prophetic conception of God changed everything. It inspired all thought, controlled all action, and determined the form and spirit of all sacrifice and service. It lifted the religion of Israel into a loftier plane, and made it fit to become the religion of the whole earth. Above all, it necessarily deepened the awful apprehension of the power of sin to separate man from God; and so led to that remarkable development of sin-offerings of which we have just seen a specimen.

Nowhere, however, does this soul-subduing sense of sin find such solemn expression as in the offerings of the Great Day of Atonement. How shuddering a sense of the horror of sin must the worshippers have felt when they saw the goat for Azazel, on the head of which Aaron had laid the guilt and curse of Israel's offences, sent alone into the burning waste, into eternal separation! And how deep a

conviction must they not have gained of the pervasive contagiousness of sin, of its power to defile and contaminate everything which it touched, when they waited without in their silent fast, while the High Priest cleansed, with the blood of sacrifice, not only the great brazen altar and the holy place of the priests' ordinary ministry, but even that Holy of Holies, with its mystic symbols, the very seat and throne of the Most High, into which only one might go, once a year, to represent a sinful people! All this wonderful development and moralizing of sacrifice was peculiar to Israel. It was the outward sign that there dwelt in the heart of it a Divine spirit of holiness, not only sanctifying and uplifting souls, but so bending, changing, and moulding the very framework of its archaic customs as to make these signs and types of new spiritual thoughts about God.

Still throughout these sacrifices, and throughout that whole complicated system of sin-offerings, burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings, by means of which the various elements of the great idea of sacrifice were spread out and applied to the whole range of man's commerce with heaven, we observe, almost with wonder, the maintenance of the primitive ruling thought, that sacrifice is a means whereby God and man may be drawn into or kept in communion, by mutual participation in a common sacred life. Ideas of tribute, furnished by the later institution of fixed property, may, it is true, find their representation in some of the minor details of the system, but even in the peace-offerings designed to represent more fully man's feasting upon the sacred life, the original ruling idea comes out, as well in the sprinkling of the blood as in the burning of the fat, that God still partakes with man, and that it is the life-carrying blood which is the means of their communion.

And, lest there should be any mistake upon this point,

the children of Israel are stringently commanded to abstain from eating blood, because of its excellent nature and office. "Whatsoever man there be . . . that eateth any manner of blood, I will set My face against that soul. . . . For the life of the flesh is in the blood: and I have given it to you upon the altar to make atonement for your souls: for it is the blood that maketh atonement, by reason of THE LIFE." It is not, as some have imagined and taught, the death of the animal which gives value to its blood. On the contrary, its whole value depends on the life which it carries. Death is a mere collateral accident in the process of sacrifice. It is simply the means of liberating that sacred stream which carries the life. And the blood maketh atonement, not by reason of the death, but by reason of the life.

As if further to emphasize this significant fact, it is again commanded in the law: "Ye shall eat no fat of ox, or sheep, or goat. For whosoever eateth the fat of the beast of which men offer an offering made by fire unto the Lord, even the soul that eateth it shall be cut off from his people." No fat of a sacrificial beast is to be eaten, lest in eating it men should partake of that sacred portion of the fat which is sent up in the altar-smoke as a sweet savour to God.

But why, it may be asked, was the fat of the kidneys and inwards devoted to this specially sacred purpose? Because among all primitive peoples, as among the aborigines of Australia to-day, those inward organs are deemed the special seats of life. It was the life which they represented to the ancient Semites, and it is the life which they symbolize in the offerings of Israel: that sacred life which men share with God, in the maintenance of which they are good and happy; by the restoration of which (if it have been lost), they are delivered from the misery and defilement of sin.

I have compared to-day the ethnic and Jewish sacrifices, and surely if the comparison were carried no farther we could not fail to have gathered most precious and soul-inspiring lessons. We find that the Jewish system of sacrifice held fast, while developing and purifying, the ruling conception of the old Semitic world: that of a good and prosperous human existence, a life held in conscious communion with God was a necessary condition. And such, too, is the witness of the deepest and truest philosophy of our own time. The great word of modern philosophy is not thought but life. Everything depends ultimately, not upon our use of the discursive intellect, but upon the normal intuitions and faculties with which we were born, and which we can only hold from moment to moment in conscious union with God. Of the instincts of animals this is the only possible explanation. Living creatures, so low down in the vital scale that they are little more than lumps of protoplasm without brain or nervous system, perform actions which have a purpose; and a purpose, moreover, so rational that to discern it requires the effort of the highest human intelligence. What is it, then, which conceives that purpose, and aims at its attainment? Shall we say that a brainless lump of protoplasm understands the conditions of vital propagation, or the laws of hydrostatics, and orders its actions in conformity therewith? Something does. Some mind conceives and orders the rational aims in conformity with which the creature acts. What mind, then? Surely the mind of that Great Being who is the basis and support of this life, and of all life! No other conclusion is possible to a modern thinker, adequately acquainted with the facts, than that of one of our most famous living philosophers, that God is the mind of the instinctive world. And so far as man is the creature of

instinct and intuition this conclusion holds good of him also. And it reaches much farther than many imagine. For in what direction of our living activity are we independent of instinct and intuition? The passions which drive us are instinctive. The conscience which directs us is intuitive. The axioms and postulates upon which we build the whole mighty structure of our science and philosophy are intuitive. We are born with these endowments, and we cannot enlarge or alter them. They determine the direction and limits of all our thoughts and activity. We gain them from God: we keep them in God. We see and feel and do that which, through them, God determines that we shall see and feel and do.

But beyond these faculties there is another, full of Divine might and mystery, in which we discern especially the Divine image, and through which, to a certain limited degree, we share the prerogative of the Divine freedom in action. We have a will which is miraculously, supernaturally free. The Divine thought and will which absolutely determine instinctive life so far limit their interference in the human soul as to leave a really directive originating activity to our will. We can absolutely choose whether we will be the master of passion or its slave; whether we will walk in the light of reason or in the darkness of ignorance; whether we will follow the bidding of conscience or rebel against its authority. We can submit to the urgency of the Divine will of love which speaks to us through reason and conscience, or we can resist it and turn all our natural powers into mere instruments of selfishness. The will to love, and the will to live: between these two we have to choose, and we can choose. And thus in a true sense we are the creators of our own character and surroundings. It is blasphemy against the divinest property in man to say

that he is the mere creature of his environment. No doubt he has his passions and desires, and the environment of his life gives stimulus to these. But he is the ruler and master of both: not their creature and slave. If his environment be unfitting and pernicious, if reason pronounce it foolish and conscience condemn it as unjust, no matter how potent it be, though it have been gathering strength through long ages, and respect through immemorial prescription, and attachment to life at a myriad points of action, yet if it be inequitable, if it be condemned at the august assize of conscience, man can break it to pieces, he ought to break it to pieces, as a hundred times he has done, at great crises of his historical past. Man is no mere fly upon the wheel of fate, to be crushed by its inevitable revolution; he is a Maker and also a Destroyer, a true lord in God's universe, who, in his own small domain, can and must exercise something of the Divine prerogative of freedom.

Here, then, is the deep meaning, the decisive trial of his life. Will he direct its course along the path which reason shows to be wise and conscience declares to be right, or will he use his Divine prerogative of automatic determination to force the powers of his life into the service of selfish passion and greed? This is the great problem which men, churches, and societies are working out on the worldwide stage of human life to-day. In this effort sacrifice is the word of their salvation: the sacrifice of their own selfish will to live to God's holy will to love; the sacrifice of desire when it is inordinate, of the confidence of intellect when it is overweening, of the ambition of rule when it is excessive, at the mandate of conscience, which is God's witness within.

Too often seduced by the allurements of sense and the splendid shows of the world, or by the pride of a false independence, we refuse to make this sacrifice. We will be

our own god: we will shape our own course: we will mould our own life: we will live, not to serve, but to enjoy. And then, in conformity to the eternal law of our being, comes failure and depravation of all our powers, ebbing of emotion, darkening of intellect, hardening of conscience, and paralysis of will. The failure is not of one power, but of all the powers of our life. And, therefore, if we are to be saved from this shrinking, narrowing, darkening, and contamination of our being, it must be, not by this or that gleam of insight, not by this or that check of remorse or spasm of endeavour, but by the regeneration of our whole nature. We must be born anew. We must be re-united to that Divine source of loving will from which there may flow into us, filling all the shrunken channels of action and capacity, the regenerating waters of an eternal life.

That is what we need to-day: what men need in all days. And because the ancient ordinances declared it so plainly, because the act of sacrifice spoke the very word of our salvation, because the blood shared between God and man spoke so eloquently of life as our supreme need, of God as the source of its supply, and of union with God as the condition of its maintenance, therefore it was carried by Moses into the Church of the Covenant, that being there separated from all misleading superstitions (as of divination from the entrails of the victims), it might be so shaped, moulded, and moralized as to point forward to that one efficacious Sacrifice which was to be the life of the world. Of the nature and meaning of that Sacrifice I must speak at large in my next lecture. Now I will only remind you that it brought us precisely that which we needed, a new life of higher and holier powers, to be gained and kept by union with Him who was Himself divinely and eternally united to God.

Oh, loving wisdom of our God !
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight,
And to the rescue came.

Oh, wisest love ! that flesh and blood,
Which did in Adam fail,
Should strive afresh against the foe—
Should strive and should prevail !

And that a higher gift than grace
Should flesh and blood refine :
God's Presence, and His very Self,
And Essence all-Divine.

Praise to the Holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise ;
In all His works most wonderful,
Most sure in all His ways !

III.

I ENDEAVOURED to trace, in my last lecture, the historical relation between the ethnic and covenant sacrifices, and the comparison revealed to us two important facts: firstly, that there were carried over into the covenant sacrifices precisely those primitive rites which denoted the belief that through sacrifice God and man partook of a common sacred nature; and secondly, that the idea thus denoted was so developed and moralized in the complicated system of Jewish sacrifices, as to give expression to the growing belief in the spirituality of God and the sinfulness of man.

To-night we are to compare those spiritualized ordinances of the Old Dispensation with that One Sufficient Sacrifice of which they were the divinely-appointed types and foreshadowings.

But why, it may be asked, were those sacrifices of beasts, with all their materialistic and superstitious suggestions, retained in a religion of which the great aim was to spiritualize men's conceptions of God? That is a question more easily asked than answered, for how can anyone pretend to comprehend the deep designs of the Eternal? The best and most we can do is to throw the light of the divinely-accomplished result upon the several stages of the process which led to it.

First, then, in reference to the imperfections of the Mosaic law, to the rudeness of its forms, and the tentativeness of its moral advances, our Saviour has told us that these things

were suffered because of the hardness of men's hearts. Such truths were set before the rude tribes of the Beni-Israel as were within the reach of their understanding, and such rites of their Semitic past were retained as would on the one hand keep up the continuity of their thought and life, and on the other be capable, with the necessary adaptations, of representing, not altogether unworthily, the deepest truths of spiritual religion. If I am now asked what truths the particular practice of sacrifice was able to express, I answer: firstly, the truth that our natural life could only be raised to its highest and holiest power when it was lived in conscious communion with God; and secondly, that it could be only so lived in virtue of a continual sacrifice and self-surrender of the finite to the Infinite will. These truths were represented with more or less clearness by every form of the practice. At the same time it is obvious that the moral and spiritual value of this teaching would depend very largely, if not wholly, upon the conception which was formed in any particular age of the nature of the life which was offered in sacrifice. So long as it was possible to believe that this life could be shared by domestic animals, it must have been thought of rather as something physical than as anything spiritual. In proportion, however, as the sons of Israel were taught by God's Spirit the secret and meaning of their human personality, that it only attained its true ideal in the perfection of its moral qualities, in its piety, purity, courage, pity, and free self-surrender to the will of God, the offering of the sacrifice of sheep and oxen would be seen more clearly to have a representative rather than a substantial value. The blood of the slain beast did not carry, it only represented, that life of moral self-surrender which the worshipper shared with the Deity. The sacrifice still meant, indeed, the offer-

ing to God, and gaining for self of a common life, but the worshipper's view of the nature of that life would be changed. It was seen to be a self-conscious, self-determining, self-surrendering life, a life which it was possible for the Divine Love to share, and which it was elevation and redemption for human piety to offer. The practice of sacrifice could only become a morally purifying and elevating worship when it was accompanied by the consciousness of all this. It became a hindrance and a degradation if it remained nothing more than the primitive Semite thought that it was. Of what nature could the God or the worshipper be whose life was really shared by an animal? To think such a communion possible was to linger still among the savage thoughts and feelings of earlier and animal-like men.

Unless, therefore, the original idea of sacrifice took up and absorbed the advancing prophetic consciousness that God was a Spirit, and man a creature whose aims should correspond to his destiny, whose ceaseless endeavour it should be to rise out of the animal into the spiritual life, the offering of sacrifice might have a positively injurious effect. And such, in fact, in the prophetic age, was the actual result.

The connection of the prophetic schools with the practice of sacrifice is a very interesting subject of inquiry, and one which has been too much neglected. The first indication which we obtain of the prophetic disapproval, or, at least, depreciation, of sacrifice is in connection with the history of Samuel, the great founder of the prophetic schools of Israel. King Saul was pre-eminently a man of the people. He had all their excellences and defects. A capable and courageous soldier, simple in his tastes, and full of the energy of a primitive faith, he was yet narrow in thought,

superstitious in feeling, and largely tainted with the religious rudeness of the age of the Judges. With respect to sacrifice, especially, he seems to have had a trust in it as superstitious as that which Micah reposed in his domestic Levite. The mere offering of it would be of use. The want of it might bring disaster and the displeasure of Jehovah. In itself it was to Saul of so magic a quality that, rather than be without it, he would take the office of priest upon himself. It was on an occasion when, in his ritualistic enthusiasm, he had suffered the people to offer sacrifices to God of the beasts which he had been directed to destroy, that Samuel pronounced the fundamental prophetic oracle, support and inspiration of so many daring utterances in the future, "Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings, . . . as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams." David was brought up in the school of Samuel, and imbibed no little of his spirit. Often, at the critical moments of his life, we catch sayings which utter the pure, bold, spiritual insight of his master. Especially, if we are to attribute to him the authorship of Psalm li., and there seems no reason to do otherwise, he makes his deep repentance the occasion for repeating Samuel's estimate of the comparative value of material and spiritual offerings: "Thou delightest not in sacrifice, else would I give it; Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God, wilt Thou not despise."

Words like these are as clearly the voices of a spiritual faith as were Wesley's hymns in our fathers' time, or Keble's in our own. But that age of faith passed away too soon. The extending commerce and increasing luxury of the age of Solomon drew closer the ties of interest and influence which bound the Israelites to their Phœnician neighbours.

If Hiram, on the one side, gave cedars and craftsmen for the Temple, and ships and sailors for the fleet of Ezion-geber, Solomon, on the other, set the fatal example of imitating the idolatry and sensuality of Phœnicia. This example was eagerly followed by the succeeding kings of Israel and Judah, and by a people who repeated only too willingly the pleasant vices of their monarchs.

The rude and simple peasantry of Israel were not altogether without excuse; for the splendid vices of the Canaanites had the same attraction for them as had those of degenerate Rome for our barbarian forefathers. They had, we know, adopted the language of the people whom they had conquered; for Hebrew, instead of being, as some of our forefathers thought, the original language of man, was in truth the language of the vanquished Canaanites. Was it strange, then, that the simple-minded Jews should have been strongly attracted by the superior civilization of the people whose language they had learnt to speak? Phœnicia was the England of the pre-classical ages. Its people had all that largeness of mind which comes from acquaintance as well with many lands and races as with various modes of life and forms of faith. While Athens was yet a little collection of fishing huts, the leaders of Tyrian thought had developed a form of Pantheistic philosophy, and the wealthy merchants of the queen of the sea had filled her with luxuries and crowned her with palaces. To the Tyrian thinker the religion of his simple Semitic neighbours would appear gloomy, morose, and fanatical, even as their form of life was rude and unrefined. No doubt he looked down upon them with the same kind of good-natured contempt with which the Salvation Army is regarded to-day by our leaders of scientific opinion. And the Israelite who carried his honey and corn to Phœnician markets, and saw the beauty and grandeur

of the mighty city, would feel small in his own eyes and turn away abashed when he heard the utterance of a wisdom which seemed to be above him, or the report of countries as wonderful for the strangeness of their habits as for the value of their productions. Must not the owners of this vast wealth, of these great palaces, of this profound culture, know more about the gods than he did? Could he believe that the religion of such a people was nothing better than a base and childish superstition? Were not such a conclusion as arrogant and uncharitable as it was palpably foolish? And if so, might he not with advantage learn from those who were so much wiser than himself, and combine something of their stately worship with his own simpler faith and sterner morality? Inclination powerfully supported these suggestions of a timid inexperience. The first Israelite settlers in Palestine had largely married with the women of the Canaanites, and the warm Phœnician blood which ran in the veins of their descendants took kindly to the splendid spectacles, and even to the boisterous revelry and sensual licence, of the Phœnician worship.

And so, as commercial and political relations drew Israelite and Phœnician into closer and more frequent intercourse, the insidious idolatry, the splendid rites, and the demoralizing vices of the latter, crept into the social and religious life of the former; until at length, in the reign of Ahab, and under the impulse of Jezebel, herself a Phœnician princess, the worship of Baal became the state religion, and all but supplanted the ancient faith of the land. Nor did the Israelites ever shake off this demoralizing Phœnician influence. For in spite of the mighty struggle of Elijah and the remorseless massacre of Jehu, we learn equally from the records of the Israelite kings and the writings of the prophets of the eighth century before Christ, that

Phœnician idolatry, sensuality, and oppression degraded the lives of the rich and embittered those of the poor.

At length, however, in the reigns of Ahaz and Hezekiah, there came a decided turn of the tide. The eighth century before Christ was religiously the greatest century in post-Mosaic history. It is the century of the great prophetic reformation, of the mightiest prophetic effort, and of the grandest prophetic utterances with which the Bible makes us acquainted. Here it is (in the prophecies of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Micah) that the modern critic finds his first certain standing-ground. And hence it is that he can throw the light of scientific truth backward and forward, through all the centuries which preceded and followed. It is upon this century, and its glorious outburst of religious light, that attention will be more and more concentrated in the time to come. And it is precisely in this century that we find, as we should expect, the loftiest spiritual utterances on the meaning and place of sacrifice.

We learn from the historical and prophetic books, that not only were obelisks erected to Baal, the sun-god, and asherim or phallic poles to Ashtoreth, but also that altars were everywhere raised to Baal upon the high places. On these altars the Israelites offered incense and burnt-sacrifices, many of these latter consisting of human victims. The offering of human sacrifices seems, indeed, to have been specially identified with Canaanite worship. We are told that when Carthage was besieged by Agathocles the citizens offered as burnt-sacrifices two hundred boys of the highest aristocracy; and subsequently, when they had obtained a victory, sacrificed the most beautiful of their captives in like manner. From the Phœnicians the Israelites learnt the same barbarous practice. When Manasseh had stamped out the great prophetic reformation in blood, he reared up altars,

we are told, for Baal, and made an Asherah in the house of God, and made his son to pass through the fire. In the general summary, again, which is given of past abominations in the accounts of Josiah's reform, it is said that the king defiled Tophet, "that no man might make his son or his daughter to pass through the fire to Moloch." And, referring to the same evil days, Jeremiah declares that the people of Jerusalem "built high places to Baal, to burn their sons with fire, for burnt-offerings to Baal."

Now, as we saw in the last lecture, the offering of human sacrifices marks a special stage in the development of the sacrificial idea. It marks the crisis when, being no longer able to believe that animals could share the common life of the god and his worshipper, men felt themselves constrained to obtain the blood which carried that life by the sacrifice of a human being. But however the preciousness of the offered life was thus enhanced, the thought still was that the blood really carried the life; that the communion between the god and his worshipper was merely a physical communion. It was this thought accordingly which prevailed in Israel when the great prophetic movement commenced. The half-paganized masses of the people, especially in the country districts, looked upon sacrifice, whether human or animal, as a kind of magic spiritual prophylactic, which in some unknown way purified the soul by its mere offering and outward application. When the rite was duly performed the result followed: sins were covered, the god was propitiated, heaven and earth were brought into amicable fellowship. That men lived in impurity, that there were Sodomites, and women weaving hangings for the shameless Asherah in the very house of God; that they feasted to gluttony, filled Jerusalem with the blood of the innocent, and ground the faces of the poor, all this was nothing;

or, at least, nothing but what could be covered and atoned for by due observance of the sacrificial requirements.

But when night is darkest morn is nearest; and so the Church of the eighth century before Christ found it. For, suddenly, into the darkness of this vicious and idolatrous century there broke the sunrise of the brightest day with which the Jewish Church was ever blessed. With Isaiah for its voice and Hezekiah for its arm, this great religious revival and advance changed for the time the whole aspect of Jewish life. In the Book of Deuteronomy it simplified and spiritualized the law, forbidding those local sacrifices and village festivals which had been so deeply corrupted by Phœnician influence, and concentrating the whole ceremonial service of the country at Jerusalem, where it could be watched and directed by spiritually-minded men. And not only was the practice of sacrifice thus altered and purified, but its idea also was elevated and ennobled in the prophetic oracles. In itself the mere act of sacrifice, the mere slaughter of beasts and sprinkling of their blood, was declared to be useless, and even, when unaccompanied by the proper moral dispositions, unpleasing to God. Bolder words, more startling words, were never uttered upon earth than those of Isaiah to the decent rite-loving sinners of his own generation. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. . . . Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes; cease to do evil; learn to do well; seek judgment, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow." Nor were such words of fire the utterance of a solitary voice in that glorious century. It is from Hosea, the elder contemporary of

Isaiah, that our Lord quotes the memorable oracle which He commended to the attention of the hypocritical Pharisees: "I will have mercy and not sacrifice." Micah, again, the younger contemporary of the same great prophet, presents God's demand, in the form of question and answer between Balaam and Balak: "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord?" runs the question of the king of Moab. "Shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Can I win the Divine help or favour by any number, or any preciousness, of animal or human victims? No, is the reply put into the mouth of Balaam: "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

You will see that the effect of this wonderful teaching was to set the whole value of sacrifice in the spiritual disposition with which it was offered. Sacrifice represented spiritual self-surrender to God: the abandonment of all selfish desires, and a willing submission to God's will of love. If the offerer came in this temper, then would sacrifice become the actual vehicle of the Divine blessing; but if it were presented by those who had love for neither God nor man, who in fact desired God to condone the absence of such a feeling for the sake of the sacrifice, then the offering became hateful, and a mere instrument of sin.

If only Israel could have stood fast on this lofty height of religious truth, how different had been its after development, and its ultimate reception of the Lord of the prophets! But, alas! those mighty servants of God were before their time, and, as soon as Hezekiah died, the mass of the people,

led by Manasseh, and disgusted with the loss of their merry and licentious festivals, broke out into open revolt against the moral severity of the Reformers. So violent, indeed, was the reaction and so furious were the passions which a premature reform had excited, that not only were the great leaders put to death (Isaiah, according to Jewish tradition, being sawn asunder), but we read that "Manasseh shed innocent blood very much, until he had filled Jerusalem from one end to another." All the hopes of good men for the renewal of the national life were thus quenched in a bloody persecution. For, in spite of the ineffectual effort of Josiah, the old heathenish habits and feelings had been so deeply rooted in Israel during the long reign of Manasseh that no permanent change was effected until the people had passed through the fierce furnace of captivity.

Even after the Restoration, the great days of Isaiah were never to return. For so great a horror did the returned exiles feel of every form of Gentile culture, that for the protection, as they thought, of the covenant life, they determined to know no study but that of the sacred books, and no life but that which was literally prescribed therein. The large spirit of prophecy, the eagle vision of the free son of God, was known in Israel no more. Instead of the prophet these timid children of the exile took for their teacher the scribe, the slavish and laborious student of the letter of the law, the man whose delight it was to multiply ritual distinctions, and to bind fast the life of God's people in the fetters of a frivolous ceremonialism.

What enlightened views of sacrifice were to be expected from teachers like these, to whom the letter was everything, and whose sole anxiety was, not that the soul should fill its act with meaning, but that the act itself should be accurately performed? So things continued till the days of our

Lord, and we have, in the works of His contemporary Philo, a singular and very interesting illustration of the difficulty which was felt, even by the freest and largest minds, in liberating themselves from popular ritualistic prejudices.

"Since a soul," he says, "is spoken of in two senses, the whole soul, and the ruling part of it, which, to speak truly, is the soul of the soul, it seemed to the legislator (Moses) that the essence of the soul is double; blood of the whole, and the Divine spirit of the ruling part." How could a student of Plato, we are tempted to ask, describe the blood as the essence of the whole soul? Because, I answer, he was trying to combine the Jewish literalism of his own time with Platonic spiritualism; and so, as he had not courage to break utterly with the formalism of his own people, and to proclaim boldly that the blood only represented the life which it could not contain, he was obliged to tie the Jewish and Platonic conceptions together by the external bond of a dual theory. Blood was, with him, the essence of the whole soul, because the law seemed to say so; but no doubt there was a soul of the soul, an inner spiritual thing which, as the Platonic system suggested, might have the Divine Spirit for its essence.

This difficulty of Philo, and the clumsy and wholly artificial way in which he tries to extricate himself from it, is a good measure of the difficulty which his less enlightened countrymen and fellow-citizens must have felt when called upon, by the necessities of their position as excommunicated Jews, to surrender the right of partaking in the sacrificial worship of the Temple. They could not shake off the feeling that the sacrifice of a beast had some real mysterious efficacy; that when God had received the blood sprinkled on His altar, or before His mercy-throne, His mind was altered towards the worshipper. And how, then, could

believing in Christ alter that fact, if it were a fact? If blood covered sin, and made God propitious, made it safe for man to approach God, and possible for God to pardon man, was not that equally true for Christian and Jew; and was it not certain that if a Christian had to give up offering sacrifice he lost an advantage which the Jew retained?

It is very difficult for us to believe now-a-days that any calling themselves Christians could have so felt and thought; and yet it seems to me that a careful perusal of the Epistle to the Hebrews will show that it was written to those who were thoroughly possessed and terrified by such fears. That is why the author of the Epistle has to seek his arguments (not always to us convincing ones) in the pages of the Old Testament. This was the only revealed authority which was likely to be accepted by the Christian Jews to whom he wrote. If, then, he is to prove to their satisfaction that Jesus was superior to the angels, to Moses, to Aaron, and to the High Priests who succeeded Aaron; if he is to convince his readers that Jesus has offered a better sacrifice than any prescribed by the law, a sacrifice which has no need to be supplemented by the blood of goats and calves, and no need to be repeated, he must do this on the authority of that very Word of God which had defined the offices and prescribed the sacrifices. It was undoubtedly a very difficult task.

How much easier it had been, we think, to say at once, Matter is nothing, spirit is everything: sacrifice means self-surrender, the blood means the life given up to God; the Priesthood standing between God and man simply represents the fact that since, in the broken and perverted condition of the human will, none of us can comply with God's demands, it was necessary that such compliance should be offered for us by the Son of God, that so, by spiritual union with Him,

we might gain the power to offer an acceptable obedience. Seen in the light of our Lord's teaching these seem to us self-evident truths, and they are certainly not made more credible to us because they were more or less clearly foreshadowed in the sacrificial system of the law. It was far otherwise, however, with those for whom Apollos wrote. To them the law was a Divine revelation, and if they were to be persuaded to abandon the Levitical sacrifices, in must be on the authority of the law itself.

It is interesting, therefore, to notice how, in the author's summary respecting sacrifice, he supports himself on those very oracles of the Old Testament which speak the language of Isaiah. We might, perhaps, have expected the quotation here of some of those passages from the prophets which we have reviewed. But for some reason (it might be with reference to the knowledge of his readers), twenty-three out of the twenty-nine passages quoted in this Epistle are from the Pentateuch or the Psalms, the fundamental law and the book of common devotion. More striking still is it that every primary passage which is cited to illustrate the work of Christ is taken from the Psalms. We find, therefore, as we might expect, that when our author proceeds to declare the true nature of the sacrifice of Christ, he bases his exposition upon the words of a psalm.

What may be the age, or who may be the author, of Psalm xl. it is impossible to say. Ewald thinks that the reference to the roll of the book points to the time of Josiah's reformation, and Cheyne agrees with him. But it is impossible, as Perowne says, to be certain. One thing, however, seems to me to be pretty evident, that its author belonged either to the school of Samuel or to that of Isaiah; that he is to be sought either among the sacred poets of whom David was the central figure, or in the

circle of those prophets who felt the mighty impulse of the reformation of Hezekiah.

There seems to be no other period of Israelitish history from which such words could have come. The quotation from the Psalmist is introduced by the positive statement, "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sin." What can blood, a material substance, have to do with sins, the acts of a spirit? Blood may, indeed, avail as the ceremonial means of removing a ceremonial defilement, but how can any blood, and much less that of a creature which can have neither will nor purpose in its death, cleanse the conscience from dead works? A sacrifice which can avail for us must be the sacrifice of a will like our own, and yet capable of a submission to God more perfect than any which we can offer. "Wherefore," says our author, adopting that Messianic interpretation of Psalm xl., which his readers would readily admit, "when he cometh into the world, He saith, Sacrifice and offering Thou wouldest not, but a body didst Thou prepare Me [or, as it is in the Hebrew, 'open ears didst Thou make Me']. In whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin Thou hadst no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come, in the roll of the book it is written of Me, to do Thy will, O God."

Here there is a direct comparison between the sacrifices of the law and Christ's spiritual sacrifice of perfect obedience; and our author concludes, "He taketh away the first (sacrifice), that he may establish the second (obedience)." The first was a legal shadow, the second is its spiritual substance; the first was the typical prediction, the second is the eternal fulfilment. The common element in the two representations is manifestly the surrender of a sacred life to God. Of this the legal sacrifice was but the figure and fore

shadowing, while the voluntary and complete self-surrender of the Son of God, in life and in death, to His Father's will, was the perfect realization. Thus Jesus Christ was made a High Priest, "not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." And He offered His life to God, not merely in obedience to a positive ceremonial precept, "but through an eternal spirit," through the free loving choice of a will whose determination has eternal validity and value, because on the one hand it is that of a Divine-human Person, and on the other has been fixed and stamped for ever with the seal of a redeeming death.

Here, then, according to the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, is the eternal reality, of which all the legal sacrifices were but types. Here we are to discover the spiritual efficacy of that sacrifice which at once opened for us free access to God and made us fit to avail ourselves of that access. And standing at this lofty point of view we are to look abroad upon all the sacrificial language of prophets and apostles, and find its true interpretation.

Are we told that Christ "made peace by the blood of His Cross," we know that this means, by the final surrender of His perfect life in obedience to the will of the Father. Do we read, again, that "He died for our sins," we learn hence that this is because His death had a twofold office in preparing our deliverance: firstly, it completed and crowned His perfect self-surrender to the will of the Father; and secondly, it liberated the spirit over which it seemed to triumph, opening the way into that glorified state in which it should gain higher powers, and, above all, greater viability, greater communicableness, according to His own great word: "It is expedient for you that I go away, for if I go not away the Comforter will not come to you;" and again: "I will not leave you comfortless, I will come to you;"

and yet again: "Lo, I am with you all the days, even to the end of the age." Do we read, once more, "We are justified by faith," we know, as in former cases, that this teaches us the spiritual means by which we can enter into communion with the life of Christ, sharing its will of love, and gaining in germ and potency that righteousness which is imputed to us, because in Christ we have that which in its due unfolding shall realize before men what it already is before God. Stand, in a word, at the right point of view; recognise clearly the fact that it was a new and perfect human life which in His sacrifice of Himself Christ offered to God, which He bestows upon us by His Spirit, which we can take and share by faith in Him; and then everything arbitrary and unethical falls away of itself from our conception of Christian truth. Then it is impossible to think of God as a vengeful enemy longing for blood, as a hard trader counting up the tale of human offences and requiring from Christ their equivalent in suffering, or even as a satiated creditor willing to account to men actions which are not their own and a character which in no real sense belongs to them. Then all is natural, all is ethical, all is, if not comprehensible, at least accordant with those canons of conscience which are our only measure and test of eternal righteousness.

To find, then, that Christ made a real atonement or reconciliation, by perfecting in His own Person a life which God could accept and man could share; to call this atonement vicarious because it was made, not for Christ's own sake, but for the sake of His helpless and alienated brethren; to call it a propitiation because it was made by such a life as was in all respects well-pleasing to the Infinite Love; to hope from it, again, redemption and regeneration because the life which made it carried within itself power to deliver man from sin and to fill him with its own holy

impulses, all this is not only credible, but inspiring and uplifting. It fills the heart with joy and peace unspeakable. It explains all the past and illuminates all the future. In the light of it I understand the form and meaning of those two great Sacraments which Christ has set before the eyes of His disciples as the two visible parables of Christian truth and vehicles of Christian grace. If salvation is to be found only in sharing the life of Christ, how necessary was it to embody in striking ordinances, which none could overlook or misunderstand, firstly, the truth that each must be born anew into this life; and secondly, that he must be continually nourished thereby, through all the days of his mortal pilgrimage! How necessary, further, that the ordinances which taught the truth should convey the gift, and offer continually to our need what they exhibited to our faith!

For who amongst us is there, my brethren, who does not consciously need, for his daily work and conflict, "the power of Christ's indissoluble life"? We can all, indeed, approve and even admire that life of absolute self-surrender to God; but who of us in his own strength is able to attain to it? The assumption that we can do this, that we have only to will and to be, lies at the foundation of all those man-glorifying schemes which ignore or deny the necessity of Christ's sacrifice. To us, however, the Incarnation of the Eternal Son of the Blessed is the abiding witness that our natural will is not only broken, but impotent; that out of its own natural resources it is utterly unable to return the answer of a perfect obedience to the righteous demands of God. We need more life, more vital resource and energy throughout the whole breadth of our being, reinforcement of our will, augmentation of the springs of feeling, new clearness and emphasis of moral judgment, oblivion of the guilty past, and above all power to break bad habits and

stubborn prejudices. We need all this, and can only gain it, as we know full well, by participation in a life larger, richer, holier, and more self-sacrificing than our own.

I have endeavoured to show you in these lectures that it was the sense of this need which showed itself of old in the rudest forms of the early Semitic sacrifices; that, as the days went by, clearer and more adequate expression was given to this craving of man's awakened conscience by such a change in the materials, the form, and the ceremonial of sacrifice as should arouse more powerfully the sense of sin, while it awakened the hope of a better, because a more ethical, atonement. And now at last, when the fulness of the time had come, we have seen the Son of the Blessed taking our flesh, feeling our weakness, bearing our sins, fighting our battles; and through all this, through all the conflict and suffering, even to death, surrendering utterly His own will to that of His Heavenly Father; so creating in our nature a humanity well-pleasing to God. Into that new humanity we have all been brought by baptism; of its love and purity and potency we may all partake day by day in Holy Communion, in solemn meditation, and the awful approaches of prayer. May God, then, give us grace, in this age of transition, when minds are so unsettled and hearts are so deeply troubled, and even the most venerable institutions of society seem trembling to their base, to lay hold on this Divine life of sacrifice, each for himself, that, losing ourselves in Christ, and our selfish will in that perfect will of love which He came to reveal and fulfil, we may gain a sure and eternal abiding-place, "in that city which hath foundations, whose Maker and Builder is God."

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